A TEN-STEP GUIDE

to Transforming Probation Departments to Reduce Recidivism

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Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

A Ten-Step Guide to Transforming Probation Departments to Reduce Recidivism

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Texas Department of Criminal Justice–Community Justice Assistance Division
Travis County (TX) Community Supervision and Corrections Department

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About TDCJ: TDCJ-CJAD administers community supervision, or adult probation, in Texas. TDCJ-CJAD does not work directly with offenders; rather, it works with the local probation departments to provide training, monitor standards and distribute and administer state probation funding. For more information, see http://tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-what.htm.

About Travis CSCD: The Travis Adult Probation Department (CSCD) is responsible for supervising adults on court-ordered probation and monitoring their compliance with the conditions set forth by the court in Travis County, Texas (Austin).

This report is informed by a report produced for Texas officials in March 2009 titled *Ten Strategies to Sustaining More Effective Practices in a Probation Department* by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, with the support of the TDCJ-CJAD and Travis County CSCD.

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Contents

Acknowledgments v
Introduction vii

Setting the Agenda for Change 1

Step 1: Engage and Inform Key Stakeholders 1
Step 2: Review and Evaluate Current Departmental Policies and Practices 5
Step 3: Analyze the Evaluation and Develop a Mechanism for Overseeing Change 10

Redesigning Departmental Policies and Practices 13

Step 4: Improve Probationer Screening and Assessment Processes 13
Step 5: Align Supervision Plans with Screening and Assessment Results 20
Step 6: Redesign Incentive and Sanctioning Strategies 26
Step 7: Develop Recidivism-Reduction Training 29

Implementing Procedures to Ensure Quality and Monitor Progress 33

Step 8: Develop and Implement a Process- and Outcome-Accountability System 33
Step 9: Retool the Personnel Evaluation System to Reinforce Agency-wide Recidivism-Reduction Efforts 37
Step 10: Review Progress and Set Goals for Continuous Improvement 40

Conclusion 43

Notes 44
Appendix A: Sample Subcommittee Work Plan 46
Appendix B: Structure of Travis County Central Assessment Report 47
Appendix C: Travis County Risk and Criminogenic Assessment Matrix 48
Appendix D: Sample Violation Response Table 49
Appendix E: Travis County's Fidelity Study Data Collection Forms 51
Appendix F: Travis County's Subcommittee Structure 56

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Introduction

Probation officials across the country increasingly have to do more with less. They oversee agencies that are responsible for record numbers of people under community supervision; according to recent estimates, 1 in 45 adults in the United States are on probation or parole.[i] Though their budgets are being cut, probation departments are expected to improve the success rates of the increasing numbers of individuals they supervise and to reduce crime in the community by preventing reoffending. These high expectations and the intense public scrutiny that follows a high-profile failure require that probation officials revisit their agency's goals, processes, and measures for success.

The core mission of a probation department is to reduce probationer recidivism. Reviewing a growing body of knowledge and experience, experts point to four core practices that are essential to probation agencies' success in achieving this mission. Based on current best practices, probation departments should

1. Effectively assess probationers' criminogenic risk and need, as well as their strengths (also known as "protective factors");
2. Employ smart, tailored supervision strategies;
3. Use incentives and graduated sanctions to respond promptly to probationers' behaviors; and
4. Implement performance-driven personnel management practices that promote and reward recidivism reduction.

To maximize its positive impact in the community, a probation department must fully implement each of the four practices. Many departments have made efforts to put in place some of these practices, but few have been able to design and implement a comprehensive plan that reflects all four. In many cases, agencies committed to transformation have encountered practical barriers that have impeded implementation of one or several of the practices even if they succeed at implementing others. For example, a probation department may have adopted a new assessment tool to determine an individuals' criminogenic risk and need, but if department officials were unsuccessful in using the findings to determine the conditions of supervision, then the tool likely had limited or no impact. Similarly, if the department's strategies for sanctioning probationers do not support its supervision and treatment goals and the judiciary doesn't ensure that supervision and sanctioning policies are consistent, then those goals will be undermined.

Transforming a department to implement each of the four practices of recidivism reduction can seem impossibly complex, especially for agencies facing funding cuts and

growing numbers of probationers. Department transformation is not a simple or quick process, but is possible (as is evidenced by the case study described in this guide). This guide provides a 10-step action plan to see the department through the transformation from beginning to end and align it with the four practices of recidivism reduction. The 10 steps are meant to work in tandem. Departments undergoing a transformation should pursue each step to maximize effectiveness.

Audience

The guide is meant for officials at probation departments already committed to recidivism reduction, as well as the county and state leaders prompting change. These departments have already reached a consensus that transformation is necessary, and that the agency's mission should bring recidivism reduction to the front and center. As such, this guide does not offer advice to stakeholders about making the initial case for transforming their probation agency.[1] Rather, it focuses on actions department leaders should take after stakeholders have agreed that agency transformation is necessary.

How to Use this Guide

The 10 steps outlined in the guide help probation officials refocus the agency toward reducing crime and re-offense rates among probationers. As a whole, they provide an action plan for realizing the practices of recidivism reduction. They are presented in three phases: 1) setting an agenda for change; 2) redesigning the department's policies and practices; and 3) implementing procedures to ensure quality and monitor progress. (See Figure 1, page ix, for a depiction of the ten steps and three phases.)

It is important to note that the 10 steps are not all meant to function as a sequence of events; in particular, the steps in phase two will often be concurrent actions (e.g., step four may happen at or around the same time as step seven). The probation department should, therefore, plan to pursue these steps at the same time, rather than staggering one after the other. When the department starts one step, it should immediately start thinking about commencing the subsequent steps—rather than waiting until completion of the prior step. Officials must ensure that the time that lapses between steps doesn't kill the momentum of the project or lead to distractions that derail it. Furthermore, the steps won't all take the same length of time; officials may accomplish some in a single meeting, whereas others may take years to complete.

Each of the steps described in this guide must be in place and well integrated to create a major cultural and philosophical shift in the agency. To help agencies

1. For more information on strategies for communicating the need for transformation, see Elyse Clawson and Meghan Guevara, *Putting the Pieces Together: Practical Strategies for Implementing Evidence-Based Practices* (Washington, DC: Crime and Justice Institute, Community Resources for Justice, 2011), available at http://nicic.gov/Library/024394.

Figure 1. Overview of the Guide

Setting an Agenda for Change	Redesigning Departmental Policies and Practices	Implementing Procedures to Ensure Quality and Monitor Progress
Step 1: Engage and Inform Key Stakeholders	Step 4: Improve Probationer Screening and Assessment Processes	Step 8: Develop and Implement a Process- and Outcome-Accountability System
Step 2: Review and Evaluate Current Departmental Policies and Practices	Step 5: Align Supervision Plans with Screening and Assessment	Step 9: Retool the Personnel Evaluation System to Reinforce Agency-wide Recidivism-Reduction Efforts
Step 3: Analyze the Evaluation and Develop a Mechanism for Overseeing Change	Step 6: Redesign Incentive and Sanctioning Strategies	Step 10: Review Progress and Set Goals for Continuous Improvement
	Step 7: Develop Recidivism-Reduction Training	

assess their progress, a checklist of key activities is at the end of each step. The guide also provides a resource section that relates to the topics in each step, and includes appendices with sample documents from a probation department that underwent a transformation similar to what is described in this guide.

Shepherding a probation organization through the lengthy and intricate process of change is not easy. Probation departments are complex structures with many moving parts. (Figure 2, page xi, represents the different points at which a probationer comes in contact with a probation department.) They perform many functions; not only do they manage the massive number of daily needs of individuals under their supervision, but they also oversee complicated administrative and operational systems. To achieve any meaningful measure of success, department administrators and involved personnel must fully commit to the transformation endeavor and agree on shared goals. Equally important, leaders involved in the transformation project must remain flexible, patient, and optimistic as the effort may take multiple years. This guide will help departments keep these important points in mind as they get started.

Background and Development of the Guide

This guide draws extensively on the experience of a multi-year effort in Travis County, Texas (Austin), to implement each of the four recidivism reduction practices. The fieldwork in Travis County emerged from an on-the-ground reality: Although much had been written about evidence-based practices in *parole* agencies, little or no research had been conducted on how the individual elements of effective *probation* practices can be used together to produce positive agency-wide outcomes. Moreover, in the probation

studies that do exist, the level of rigor used to examine the four practices of recidivism reduction—validated risk assessment, tailored supervision strategies, incentives and graduated sanctions, and performance-driven personnel management policies—is fairly uneven. Given this, researchers from the CSG Justice Center, led by Dr. Tony Fabelo, observed the agency's transformation. From 2005 to 2008, researchers worked with leaders from Travis County's probation department, along with judges, prosecutors, members of the defense bar, and county officials, to design and integrate each of the four essential transformation practices into the department's everyday processes. Several years later, researchers returned to examine the long-term impact of the department's transformation and to document their findings.

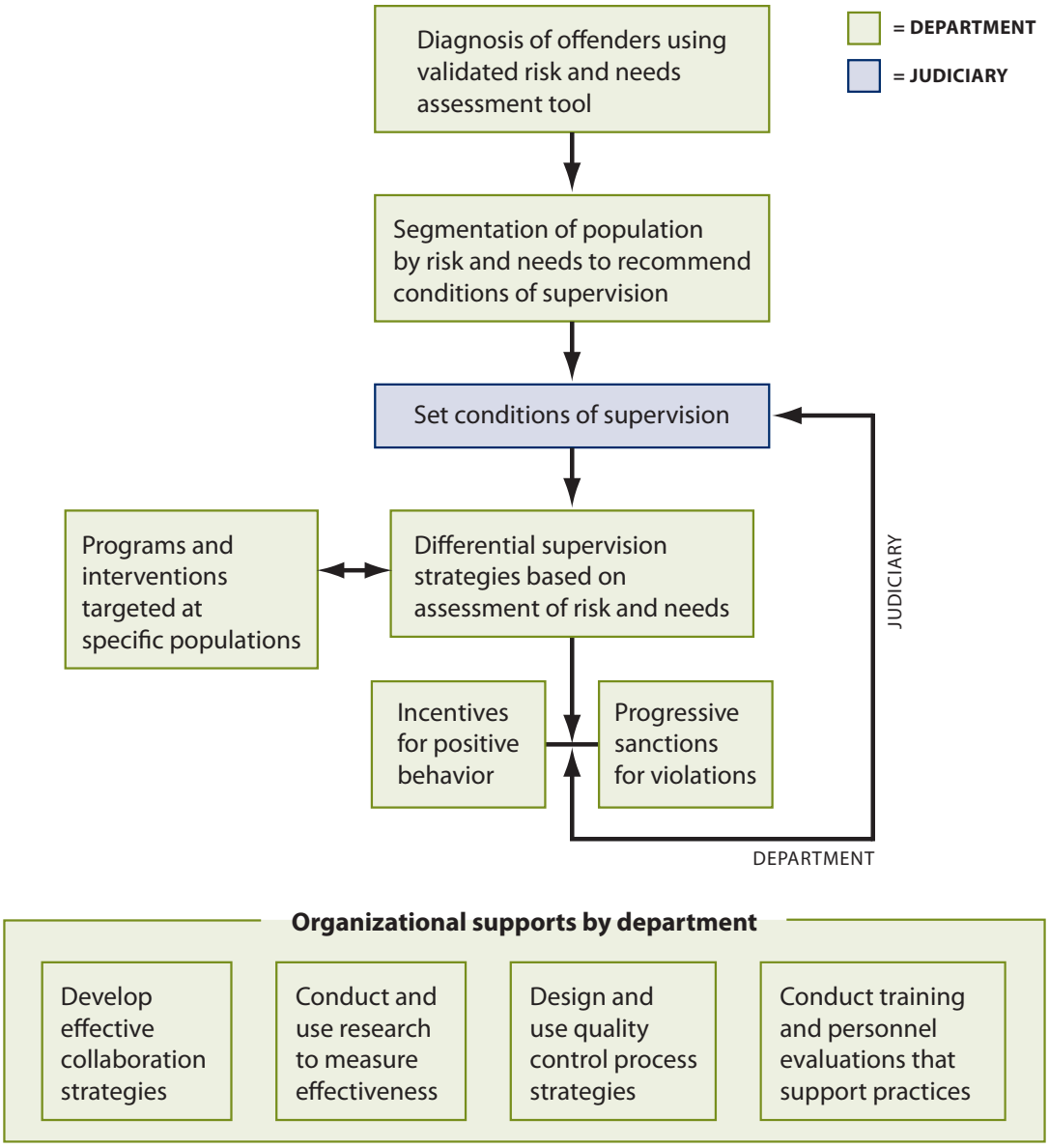
The experience in Travis County demonstrates that implementing the four practices of recidivism reduction is not only possible, but that it can also yield dramatic and positive improvements for the involved agency, the community, and probationers. Researchers saw tremendous developments in Travis County:[2]

- Felony probation revocations declined by 20 percent.
- Felony technical revocations fell by 48 percent—the largest reduction in the five most populous counties in Texas, and nearly 10 times the statewide reduction of 5 percent.
- The decreased number of technical revocations averted $4.8 million in state incarceration costs.
- Reductions in motions to revoke probation averted close to $400,000 in local jail costs in one year (based on costs of $24 per day, per person).
- The one-year re-arrest rate for probationers fell by 17 percent, compared with similar probationers before the departmental overhaul.
- Re-arrest rates for low-risk offenders declined by 77 percent.

To anchor the guide's recommendations in the real world, Travis County's experience is highlighted throughout the document. Similarly, "Tips," or lessons learned from probation departments that have undergone a similar transformation, are also spotlighted.

2. The statistics that follow are for 2005–2008. More information can be found in a series of reports available online at http://www.co.travis.tx.us/community_supervision/TCIS_Initiative.asp.

Figure 2. Multi-Level Model of Probation System Components



Setting the Agenda for Change

Setting the agenda for change involves galvanizing stakeholders (Step 1), assessing the agency's current policies and procedures (Step 2), and putting a comprehensive plan for department transformation into motion (Step 3). The major impetus for change should be clear before embarking on this multistep process; it may have been sparked for myriad reasons by any number of individuals or sources, such as a judge or a probation director or by a community taskforce or state-level mandate. (It is presumed that readers of this guide already have committed to department transformation and are looking for practical guidance in this process.)

The day-to-day management of an effort to transform a probation department may be different in every jurisdiction. For example, the change process may be led by individuals holding very diverse positions or even by groups of differing composition, and may require that strategies are tailored to distinct agency or jurisdiction circumstances.[3] The steps that follow recognize (and account for) these differences among jurisdictions.

STEP 1: Engage and Inform Key Stakeholders

In many jurisdictions, there is minimal dialogue among personnel from the probation department and colleagues in other components of the criminal justice system or with social service system providers and administrators. Law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, pre-trial service agencies, and other criminal justice professionals may not feel they have a stake in the day-to-day operations of probation agencies, even though the success (or failure) of probation departments in reducing reoffending and recidivism has an impact on their agencies. In some cases, stakeholder agencies may even have an entrenched interest in maintaining the status quo. By engaging and educating these officials, as well as probation staff, other county officials, social service system representatives, and members of the community, probation leaders will build broad support that provides the critical foundation for improving the performance of the department.

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3. For the sake of simplicity, this guide uses the general terms *probation leaders* and *probation department managers* to refer to the individuals spearheading such efforts, and *department* or *agency* when referring to the entity being transformed.

At the outset of the planning process, the head of the probation department should appoint high-level officials from all operational areas of the agency to form an executive committee. The probation chief, who should head this executive committee, should also reach out to leaders from law enforcement, courts, pre-trial services, other community corrections agencies, and community organizations (such as mental health and substance abuse treatment organizations and victims groups) to engage them in advising probation department leaders who oversee the transformation. Representatives from other agencies should understand how the probation department functions, and should have a basic understanding of the challenges faced by the department and its officers.

These partnerships allow the probation department to address stakeholders' concerns and elicit buy-in at critical moments during the change process. Collaboration with stakeholders provides opportunities for the probation department to convey to its partners how the department's transformation will affect them. For example, the department may determine that the incentives and graduated sanctions its officers use do not complement those used by community-based treatment and service providers, and vice-versa. Engaging this partner allows the department to explain this problem and work cooperatively to address it. The purpose of working with stakeholders is not to *convince* them of the need for transformation, but rather to engage with a partner with whom the department can pursue solutions to specific problems.

If key representatives in a jurisdiction are not engaged, all subsequent planning activities may be complicated. For example, there may be key stakeholders who present obstacles to change, even when included in the planning process from the beginning. By engaging them early in the process, probation leaders can anticipate problems, calm anxiety over the specifics of agency change, and ease implementation of the plan. Resolving these issues requires strong leadership and ongoing participation in the executive-level committee by the heads of the probation department and partner agencies. If obstacles arise from the competing interests of different stakeholders (for example, between the public defenders and prosecutors), tackling these issues, identifying shared goals, and devising appropriate compromises can ultimately result in a stronger probation department.

TIP Encourage Judicial Involvement

The support of judges is particularly important for the probation department to succeed in transforming itself. Judges have a distinct ability to mandate or motivate change. Probation department transformation can only be realized if judges understand and fully support the plan and agree to abide by new standards or policies that they will be responsible for implementing and enforcing. This collaborative role may be a new one for some judges who are accustomed to directive decision-making. Probation department leaders should cultivate a champion among the judges in their jurisdiction and be sure to reach out to the judiciary early in the process.

Once probation leaders have identified and engaged key stakeholders, they should schedule orientation sessions to educate these stakeholders on key aspects of department operations and the need for transformation. These sessions should explain the rationale for reworking the department's current practices and provide an overview of the process through which the transformation will occur. Sessions should be tailored to specific audiences.

These information sessions should highlight how the probation department functions in key day-to-day activities. Department leaders can organize these orientation sessions around the four practices of recidivism reduction (described in the introduction). One session can talk about the importance of using risk assessments. Another can review how the department designs its supervision strategies. A third can talk about the incentives and graduated sanctions used by the department. And a fourth can cover personnel management, training, and evaluation issues.

TIP

Provide Tailored Orientations to Judges

Leaders may want to consider providing one-on-one presentations to judges and seminars with key officials. Ideally, outside experts—such as consultants from a technical assistance organization—can facilitate the presentations to lend an additional air of objectivity. Practitioners can seek assistance from the National Institute of Corrections or other experts.

Before these orientation sessions, the department should compile and create materials that describe department processes and the limitations of these processes. In particular, probation leaders can develop a flow chart or conceptual model that graphically represents how a person under probation supervision proceeds from arrest to court to probation supervision and identifies the key steps and decisions the probation department must make during this process. This flow chart shows how the

Travis County's Planning Process

The managers of Travis County probation's transformation process are advised by an outside multidisciplinary committee. Travis County has a "community justice council" that meets monthly. Headed by the local district attorney, the council brings together key stakeholders, including criminal justice practitioners, community service providers, and citizens. By law, the council has to approve the biennial plans presented by the probation department to the state. It also provides specific guidance on the transformation project.[4]

4. For an example of the most recent community corrections plan as of this writing, see http://www.co.travis.tx.us/community_supervision/pdfs/cj_plan_2010-2011.pdf.

probation department interacts with other parts of the criminal justice system, and helps stakeholders see how probation transformation might affect them. Sharing the model early in the planning process will prepare staff and stakeholders for the change process and show how the proposed transformation is linked to broader, agreed-upon goals such as reducing costs or improving public safety. (For an example of a conceptual model, see Figure 2 on page xi.)

Once leaders have identified the need for change and provided an orientation on department functioning to key stakeholder groups, department leaders should organize ongoing agency-wide meetings. At these meetings, leaders should present the conceptual model described above. They should also explain to probation department staff the planning and evaluation process that will drive the changes in agency administration, day-to-day work plans of staff, and other organizational or personnel changes needed to support the initiative.

Checklist for Step 1: Engage and Inform Key Stakeholders

- ✓ Engage a key judge, prosecutor, member of the defense bar, county official, and a leader from other partnering disciplines to understand and support the goals of the project and designate them to be liaisons with their peers in the jurisdiction.
- ✓ Convene a multidisciplinary executive committee, headed by the chief of the probation department and representing other stakeholder groups, to advise agency transformation.
- ✓ Create and compile materials that document the rationale for reworking the department's current practices. In particular, these materials should highlight the need for improving risk assessment, reconfiguring supervision strategies, implementing graduated sanctions and incentives, and designing performance-driven personnel management.
- ✓ Design seminars and presentations to educate key stakeholders on the basic elements of and need for the change process. Explain their role in both planning and reviewing strategies and any opportunities for focused problem solving.
- ✓ Hold focused meetings with specific community stakeholder groups or organizations, such as those committed to mental health treatment or housing services, to discuss the implications of probation agency transformation for improved collaboration.
- ✓ Document areas of stakeholder concern to investigate further, as needed. Share a model for stakeholders to review that indicates the direction of the agencies' efforts.
- ✓ Organize ongoing agency-wide meetings to explain the planning and evaluation process that will drive the changes in agency administration, day-to-day work plans of staff, and other organizational or personnel changes needed to support the initiative.

Recommended Reading

Peggy Burke, "Involvement of Noncorrectional Stakeholders," in *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), 12–14, http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

—, "Preparing the Organization for Change," in *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), 42–44, http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

Council of State Governments, "Policy Statement 1, Recommendation B: Identify key stakeholders and engage them in a discussion regarding reentry," in *Report of the Reentry Policy Council* (New York: Council of State Governments, 2005), http://reentrypolicy.org/Report/PartI/ChapterI-A/PolicyStatement1/Recommendation1-B.

Crime and Justice Institute, *Implementing Evidence-based Principles in Community Corrections: Leading Organizational Change and Development* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/019344.

Roger K. Warren, "Evidence-Based Practice to Reduce Recidivism: Implications for State Judiciaries," in *Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community: An Integrated Model* (Washington, DC: The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, August 2007), http://cjinstitute.org/files/Judicial_BoxSet_Sep09.pdf.

STEP 2: Review and Evaluate Current Departmental Policies and Practices

In many probation departments, little is known about which particular strategies and practices reduce probationers' criminal activities. Consequently, administrators often do not know which policies and procedures need to be modified and which need to be eliminated altogether. Probation managers, along with the advisory committee, should closely analyze their policies and procedures to gauge the degree to which they are adhering to the four practices of recidivism reduction described in the introduction (assessing for criminogenic risk and need, basing supervision strategies on assessment results, implementing graduated sanctions and incentives, and designing performance-driven personnel management). A comprehensive evaluation that takes into account the realities of the department provides a baseline against which future performance can be compared and guides an orderly change process toward implementing these practices.

The evaluator should collect *quantitative* data from databases. These data include the number of people under supervision, the number revoked (and why they were revoked), the number who successfully complete supervision, and more. The evaluator should also collect *qualitative* information from other sources. These other sources

include a review of department policies, focus groups with a cross-section of staff at all levels of the department, and lengthy discussions with department officials and outside stakeholders (such as those listed in Step 1). Table 1 (page 7) provides examples of the types of questions that an evaluator should seek to answer. An evaluator can use these questions as a starting point for planning a formal evaluation.

On completing his or her work, the evaluator should write a summary of findings that provides an appropriate level of detail. Probation leaders should then solicit feedback on the evaluation and identify a process for responding. The findings should be presented to the entire department staff (key points alone might suffice when presenting to the entire department at an agency-wide staff meeting). A summary of the findings should also be made available to each of the stakeholder groups identified in Step 1. The presentations of findings should be tailored to the needs of the different stakeholders. Probation agency leaders may require a complete, detailed report, but partners may only need a summary of the major takeaway points. Tailoring the dissemination of findings to various stakeholders will help ensure that both the findings and feedback to it are nonconfrontational and constructive, errors or other mistakes are caught before wide dissemination, and the process establishes an open dialogue that includes a forum for employees to voice their opinions in ways that can improve the department.

To help probation leaders pore through the results of the department evaluation, the evaluator(s) should organize the resulting report according to the four practices of recidivism reduction (described in the introduction). This way, those leading the transformation effort can determine the department's progress (or lack thereof) toward implementing each of the four practices. How they translate the findings into action is the subject of the next step.

TIP Engage an Outside Evaluator

Ideally, the probation department manager should engage an outside expert, such as a veteran evaluation researcher with probation experience or a probation policy expert from a think tank or technical assistance center, to conduct a thorough review of the department's existing strengths and weaknesses. An outside evaluator is less likely to be influenced by internal organizational politics. In the absence of an outside evaluator, an experienced in-house researcher or group can lead the investigation if impartiality can be assured.

TIP Share Evaluation Results with the Probation Manager First

The probation director should be given an opportunity to carefully review the detailed findings in private and in advance of broader dissemination to ensure the validity of the evaluation approach, confirm the accuracy of the findings, and determine what context might be necessary to convey before the results are made public.

Table 1: Sample Questions for a Departmental Evaluation

Area of Study	Sample Questions to Ask
Stakeholders and Organizational Change	Does the department have a forum for collaborating with stakeholder agencies, such as a community corrections council, that meets on a regular basis?
	Does the department periodically develop and revise a general plan for how individuals are supervised in the community, and is this plan reviewed by all stakeholders?
	How are judicial policies and perspectives integrated into the agency's policies, strategies, and operations?
Profile of Probation Population	What is the gender and racial composition of the probation population?
	What is the average age, education level, employment history, and other demographic information of the probation population?
	How many individuals were enrolled in Medicaid and other federal benefits prior to community supervision?
	What are their specialized needs, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment needs?
	How many have dependent children and/or child support obligations?
	Where do people under probation supervision live?
Staff Readiness	In past operational changes, how involved were high-level personnel?
	Do key personnel support a significant change in operating culture?
Operations	Are policies and procedures manuals available?
	How often are policies and procedures manuals updated?
	What is the process for updating policies and procedures manuals?
	How is feedback from probation officers solicited and incorporated into program and policy adjustments?
Screening and Assessment	Does the department screen and assess for individuals' criminogenic risk and need?
	What screening and assessment instruments does the agency use?
	Are they validated?[5]
	Does the agency norm such instruments to its own probation population?[6]

5. Assessment instruments that have been "validated" are those that have been statistically determined to accurately predict outcomes for the population served in the issue areas being assessed. Validity applies to both face value (whether the instrument or process used makes sense to those who use it) and predictive validity (whether the instrument or process can predict and measure risks such as recidivism with statistical accuracy). Validation processes have found that tools validated previously may not be valid for all populations: what works for probationers may not work for prisoners.

6. Instruments that have been "normed" to the local population have been calibrated to ensure that results for the new population, such as the population of prisoners in a particular facility, are as valid as they are for the population for which the instruments were developed.

Table 1, continued

Area of Study	Sample Questions to Ask
Screening and Assessment, continued	Is the screening and assessment process properly considered when conditions of supervision are imposed and supervision case plans are developed?
	Are personnel trained in administering and applying the results of instruments?
Supervision	Is the population divided into caseloads according to their criminogenic risk and need? If not, how are people assigned to different types of caseloads?
	Does the deployment of program resources match the criminogenic risk and need of the population?
Incentives and Sanctions	Does the department use incentives and graduated sanctions?
	Are sanctions administered swiftly? Are they predictable and consistent?
	Is there judicial agreement on incentives and graduated sanctions?
	Are there mechanisms to monitor the use of progressive sanctions and the way they are matched to the criminogenic risk and need of the population?
Social Service and Treatment Programs	Has an inventory of available community service and treatment programs been conducted?
	Are there mechanisms to certify the quality of external programs and adjust the capacity of programs to meet changing demands?
	Are there evaluations of internal programs using sound research designs?
	Are programs based on cognitive-behavioral approaches, and do these programs use community and neighborhood resources?
Personnel Training and Evaluation	Is there training to enhance key personnel skills, including motivational interviewing, casework, and effective supervision planning?
	Is the personnel evaluation system oriented towards measuring and promoting performance related to these skills as well as toward recidivism reduction?
Information Technology	Are information systems designed in such a way that data from assessments, program evaluations, and performance measures can be entered easily and the fields can be modified or adapted to specific needs?
	Can probation information systems be linked to social service and treatment program information systems?
	If not linked, can information sharing be improved in other ways?
	Are there safeguards in place to ensure HIPAA and other privacy mandates are met when exchanging protected health and substance abuse treatment information?
	Can reports on population profile and key indicators (number of revocations per year, caseload size, workload measures, successful completions) be generated electronically and automatically?
Research and Evaluation	Are there effective research-, audit- and/or assessment-based feedback systems to promote performance and administrative accountability?
	What is the department's internal research and evaluation capacity?
	Does it have partnerships with universities or other research entities?

Checklist for Step 2: Review and Evaluate Current Departmental Policies and Practices

- ✓ Contract with an expert or set up a process for unbiased internal review to thoroughly document the department's current systems, policies, and practices.
- ✓ Compile both quantitative and qualitative data that draw on multiple sources and appropriately engage all stakeholders in the evaluation.
- ✓ Review and respond to the list of questions provided in this guide.
- ✓ Develop stakeholder-tailored summaries of findings.
- ✓ Present the findings to each audience in ways that invite feedback and improve the quality of a final report.
- ✓ Establish a process for integrating the feedback into the planning and improvement process.

Recommended Reading

Brad Bogue, Bill Woodward, Nancy Campbell, Mark Carey, Elyse Clawson, Dorothy Faust, Kate Florio, Andrew Goldberg, Lore Joplin, and Billy Wasson, *Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community: Outcome and Process Measures* (Washington, DC: The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, 2005), http://nicic.gov/Library/021041.

Peggy Burke, *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), 16, http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

Peggy McGarry and Becki Ney, "Document and Assess Current Policies and Practices," in *Getting It Right: Collaborative Problem Solving for Criminal Justice* (Washington, DC: Center for Effective Public Policy, 2006), http://nicic.gov/Downloads/PDF/Library/019834.

National Institute of Corrections, Community Corrections Division, U.S. Department of Justice, "Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community" series, in *Intermediate Measures and Database Handbook and Instruction Manual* (Washington, DC: The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, 2007), http://www.cjinstitute.org/files/int_measures_%20user_manual_110107.pdf.

STEP 3: Analyze the Evaluation and Develop a Mechanism for Overseeing Change

Once the evaluation from Step 2 is completed, probation leaders face a considerable challenge in sorting through the mountain of data. They must now prioritize the findings, determine what actions to take, and put mechanisms into place to make sure those actions adhere to the findings. Probation leaders should hold a strategic planning session with other stakeholders on the executive committee to review the data from the evaluation. From this review, they should identify major challenges faced by the department and the goals for addressing them. The purpose of the session is to consider how close the department is to embodying the four practices of recidivism reduction (described in the introduction), based on the results of the evaluation. Probation leaders, with their colleagues from other agencies, should identify the set of challenges facing the department, determine which other stakeholders to involve in the process and in what capacities, and agree upon a set of specific and measurable objectives for the reform effort.

TIP Choose an Off-Site Venue for Strategic Planning

Holding this strategic planning session off site may help focus participants' attention and prevent interruptions from day-to-day demands.

Some common challenges in each of the four recidivism reduction practices, which provide a starting point for discussion during the strategic planning session, are listed below.

Recidivism Reduction Practice	Common Challenge/Topic for Discussion
Effectively assess probationers' criminogenic risk, need, and strengths (protective factors)	Screening and assessment procedures are not standardized or validated, resulting in ineffective or unreliable identification of probationers' criminogenic risk, need, and strengths.
Employ smart, tailored supervision strategies	Supervision strategies are only compliance-oriented and not geared toward problem solving to reduce recidivism—that is, they are not focused on the complex social, economic, health, and behavioral health challenges that probationers must overcome to break the cycle of violating or reoffending that results in incarceration.
Use incentives and graduated sanctions to respond promptly to probationers' behaviors	Probation officers and community-based treatment and service providers are not using consistent or complementary sanctions, incentives, and supervision strategies and techniques.
Implement performance-driven personnel management practices that promote and reward recidivism reduction	The probation agency lacks appropriate training and the ability to develop its training capacity. Staff training opportunities and personnel performance evaluations are not aligned with the objectives of supervision and the goals of the agency.

This planning session will yield a long list of issues and areas to further explore. Though critical, the tasks that emerge from this planning session may become subordinate to the top challenges facing department leaders. Leaders can ensure that the department will make continual progress in its transformation by charging formal subcommittees with oversight of specific aspects of change that will affect their members and audiences, and directing these subcommittees to establish detailed work plans and timelines.

These subcommittees should be organized by the topics and challenges identified by the executive committee. One subcommittee may focus on how assessments are conducted. Another may look at supervision strategies and techniques. Others may look at graduated sanctions and incentives, information management, staff development and training, and personnel evaluations. Different subcommittees should be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the steps in this guide that correspond with their topic area. They should be charged specifically with collecting information about those topics and overseeing how the agency transforms itself in an area identified by the executive committee. (See Appendix F for a list of Travis County's subcommittees, along with descriptions of their assignments.)

The subcommittee structure provides the transformation initiative its shape and momentum. These are the bodies that move the effort forward. They do the background work necessary to make recommendations to the executive committee. To ensure that subcommittees' work is put to good use, agency leaders who serve on the executive committee should establish a process to review and approve each subcommittee's recommendations. Committee's schedules, expectations, and deliverables should be clearly defined, as should their scope of work. Subcommittees should comprise not only policy staff, but also line-level workers. Members of stakeholder groups—law enforcement, professionals who work in the pre-trial services and in the courts, representatives of community-based treatment and service agencies—also should be invited to participate. Key stakeholders not invited to participate on a subcommittee should be given an opportunity to offer feedback to proposed changes that would affect their own roles, departments, or objectives.

TIP

Standardize the Subcommittee Process

Subcommittee chairpersons should use identical forms to chart their group's work plan and schedule; ideally, using a detailed one-year timeline with milestones. These documents enable the chair and members of the subcommittee, as well as members of the executive-level committee, to quickly understand specific tasks, assign point people to help complete each task, and track the group's progress. The subcommittee work plans and timelines also enable the executive committee to monitor overall progress and recommend adjustments when necessary. (See Appendix A for a sample subcommittee work plan and Appendix F for a list of subcommittees implemented in Travis County.)

Some of the changes identified by the executive committee and researched and then implemented by the subcommittees may take years to fully realize. Nonetheless, a realistic initial project timeline with key goals and phases—taking into account the size of the department and available resources—can help maintain pressure on the subcommittees to complete the assigned tasks while also providing a reasonable, attainable period for the department to complete the transformation (for example, two years).

Checklist for Step 3: Analyze the Evaluation and Develop a Mechanism for Overseeing Change

- ✓ Identify objectives for agency transformation, based on the findings from Step 2.
- ✓ Establish a subcommittee structure to perform specific aspects of the strategic plan.
- ✓ Establish work plans and timelines for each subcommittee's tasks, as well as a schedule for completing the initial department-wide reform effort.

Recommended Reading

Peggy Burke, *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), 16, http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

Center for Effective Public Policy, *Prisoner Reentry Initiative Coaching Packet 3: Strategic Planning* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2009), http://www.cepp.com/coaching.htm.

Crime and Justice Institute, *Lighting the Way: Improving Corrections Policies and Practices: Real World EBP: Keys to Success* (Boston: Crime and Justice Institute, 2009), http://www.cjinstitute.org/files/CJI_Integrated_Model_Booklet.pdf.

Redesigning Departmental Policies and Practices

The second phase of agency transformation activities focuses on how the probation department can be retooled to reduce recidivism and reoffending among probationers (as such, the steps in this phase mirror the four recidivism reduction practices stated in the introduction and throughout the guide). Extensive research shows that using screenings and assessments more effectively (Step 4), ensuring that supervision strategies are informed by the assessment and screening results (Step 5), tailoring sanctioning and incentive strategies to advance supervision goals (Step 6), and improving staff training (Step 7) can help reduce recidivism.[7]

STEP 4: Improve Probationer Screening and Assessment Processes

Screening and assessing probationers are critical steps in effectively allocating supervision and service resources. These processes help departments develop tailored supervision strategies and better understand the needs and characteristics of the people the agency serves. In spite of their importance, many probation departments' screenings and assessments are often ad hoc processes using instruments that have been developed internally, tinkered with over time, and never validated in a scientific manner. Restructuring and standardizing screening and assessment procedures is arguably one of the most important aspects of transforming a probation department to bring recidivism reduction into its mission.

Part of improving the agency's screening and assessment processes involves collecting and reviewing all related tools, intake forms, and paperwork presently used to develop supervision strategies. A flow chart or process map of when screenings and assessments are conducted, and by whom, can help show how the current activities

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7. Don A. Andrews and James Bonta, *The Level of Service Inventory-Revised* (Toronto: Multi-Health Systems, 1995); D. A. Andrews, J. Bonta, and R. D. Hoge, "Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology," *Criminal Justice and Behavior 17,* 1990: 19–52; D. A. Andrews, I. Zinger, R. D. Hoge, J. Bonta, P. Gendreau, and F. T. Cullen, "Does correctional treatment work? A clinically-relevant and psychologically informed meta- analysis," *Criminology, 28,* 1990: 369–404; J. Bonta, "The Responsivity Principle and offender rehabilitation," *Forum on Corrections Research, 7*(3), 1995: 34–37; P. Gendreau and C. Goggin, "Principles of effective programming with offenders," *Forum on Corrections Research, 8*(3), 1996: 38–40.

are organized and how information is shared within the department, with the court, and with stakeholders. The flow chart should be used to identify if the probation department's screening and assessment duplicates that of pre-trial services or the court, if information is not used or needed, and if information needed to shape supervision strategies is not being collected systematically. At a minimum, the process of developing this flow chart should answer the following questions:

- What information is collected and at what point is it collected?[8]
- Does screening and assessment of probationers yield enough detailed information about their risk of revocation, re-offense, and treatment and social service needs?
- Is the information collected and presented in a uniform format that enables individuals to be more easily classified and compared?
- What information should be shared with which staff or stakeholders?[9]
- At what point does reassessment take place? Is it regularly scheduled (e.g., annually) or does it occur when a significant violation occurs or when the probationer meets a major benchmark in his or her supervision plan?

Ideally, a probation department would commission the development of customized screening and assessment instruments designed for its population profile and tailored to the sentencing and programming options of that particular jurisdiction. In reality, not all probation departments have the resources to develop their own screening and assessment instruments and will adopt existing instruments; however, it is important to note that modifying or customizing existing instruments impair their validity and reliability and should be done with caution.

Short of commissioning completely customized screening and assessment instruments, probation agencies can adopt existing instruments. The screening and assessment subcommittee should lead this effort, along with a contracted or in-house researcher. As part of the effort of identifying instruments, the researcher should look for aspects of potential instruments that are problematic or that might skew or overlook unique characteristics of the population the department works with (for example, certain instruments may use national averages for rates of unemployment and substance abuse, whereas the jurisdiction may have a higher-than-average rate). This information will

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8. The following information is collected typically during screening and assessment: demographics (for example, race, age, gender, employment and housing status, educational attainment, and financial assets and obligations); offense and criminal history; substance use and mental health status; risk level for violence, re-offense, and suicide; supervision level; and county of conviction.

9. The subcommittee should also review the literature on privacy and confidentiality to ensure the agency complies with all state and federal laws. The subcommittee can start to learn more on privacy matters and how to share information by reviewing *Information Sharing in Criminal Justice-Mental Health Collaborations: Working with HIPAA and Other Privacy Laws* by John Petrila and Hallie Fader-Towe (2010), which can be found at http://www.consensusproject.org/jc_publications.

prove useful to the subcommittee when making recommendations to the executive committee about which instruments to acquire.

Early in its work, subcommittee members, along with a researcher, should determine whether their instruments have been validated and normed for the population they serve and whether staff have been trained to administer the tools effectively.[10] Validating and norming the assessment tools are critical steps to ensure that they are truly measuring the factors they purport to measure. The process of validating screening and assessment instruments is one that should be conducted or supervised by an experienced researcher.

Travis County's Criminogenic Risk and Need Assessment Process

With the help of a consultant, Travis County's probation department adapted and validated the Wisconsin Risk Assessment Instrument, originally developed in Wisconsin in the late 1970s.[ii] The instrument consists of 11 weighted items that are associated with the risk of re-arrest and revocation. The scores for each item are added and the total is used to categorize probationers as low, medium, or high risk. To determine probationers' needs, the probation department uses an assessment tool called "Strategies for Case Supervision" (SCS).

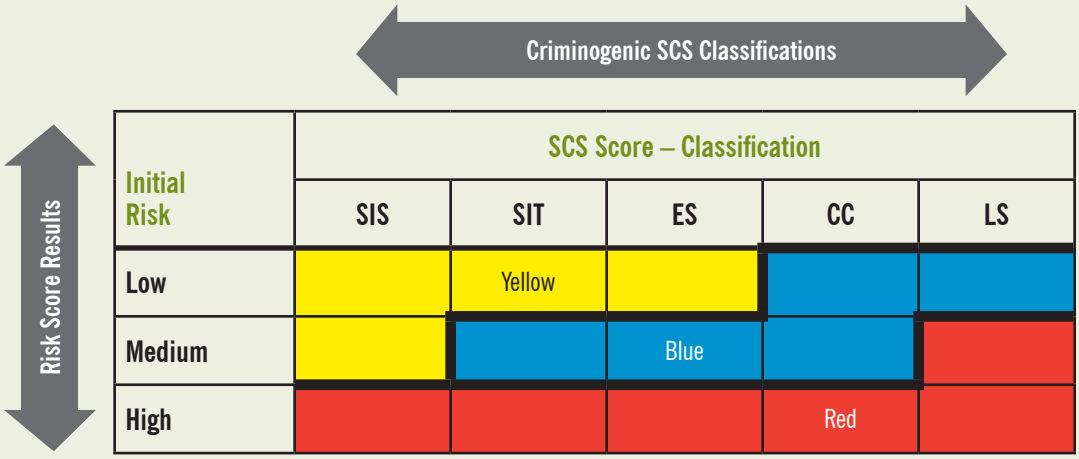
The probation department developed a color-coded system for offender risk and criminogenic classifications to assist sentencing officials in synthesizing the complex information gathered by these tools. The matrix provides levels of risk on the vertical axis and SCS classification (type of intervention for needs) on the horizontal axis, and consists of 15 possible categories in which individuals may be classified, represented by cells on the grid.

Unlike previous practices, the department does not recommend whether individuals should or should not be placed on probation using this new procedure. The department only states the assessment results and the type of supervision strategy that would apply should the court place the offender on probation. For example, low-risk, pro-social individuals with a stable lifestyle or with some skill deficit or isolated treatment need will be placed in the "yellow" category. Probationers who are classified mainly as posing a medium risk—those who are impulsive, lack skills, are easily led and have displayed destructive thinking, low self-esteem, and emotional problems—will be placed in a "blue" category. Offenders who are classified mainly as high risk and display destructive or criminal thinking will be subjected to the most restrictive supervision strategy and will be classified in the "red" category. (See Figure 3 on page 18 for a depiction of the matrix and Figure 4 on page 22 for supervision strategies associated with the color codes.)

10. For definitions of validating and norming, see footnotes 5 and 6 on page 7.

The subcommittee should examine the format in which screening and assessment information is made available to the probation department and to judges. Robust screening and assessment information, when summarized concisely and presented in a clear format, improves judges' ability to set effective conditions of supervision. Similarly, it enables probation staff to better classify probationers, allocate caseloads, design differentiated supervision strategies and plans based on an individual's unique characteristics, and devise clear outcome measures for different offender populations (see Step 8 for more on measuring outcomes of the department's work with probationers). Improving the way this information is summarized and presented saves staff time that can be better used to engage probationers, and helps avoid errors or oversights.

Figure 3: Travis County's Risk Assessment Matrix



SCS Classification	Characteristics
SIS = Selective Intervention Situational	Generally law-abiding individual
SIT = Selective Intervention Treatment	Individual unstable in one area like substance abuse
ES = Environmental Structure	Individual with impaired intellectual ability and poor life skills
CC = Casework Control	Individual with chronic instability in several areas of life
LS = Limit Setting	Individual with criminal orientations

Many probation departments have found that having all individuals screened, assessed, and diagnosed by a central unit streamlines the process and improves efforts to ensure that the quality of information collected is consistent. Compared with departments in which many probation officers conduct the criminogenic risk and need assessments (which usually include an assessment for mental health and substance use disorders) with minimal guidance from supervisors, or in which assessment information is collected through the pre-sentencing investigation, a centralized assessment process brings many advantages. First, it improves quality by ensuring that specifically trained personnel conduct the assessment. In a large department with hundreds of probation officers conducting their own assessments, inconsistencies in the assessment process are likely. Second, centralizing the assessment process provides a focal point for managers to conduct periodic quality assurance tests to identify major inconsistencies and quality concerns that can be resolved through training. (Quality assurance of the assessment process is discussed in more detail in Step 5, and training is discussed in Step 7.) Managers can easily conduct tests in which the personnel in the central diagnosis unit are asked to assess the same cases to check if there any discrepancies in how they score the same individuals. Third, by replacing the pre-sentence investigation (which many probation departments rely on as the exclusive criminogenic risk and need assessment), the central assessment process provides the court more timely assessment information.[11]

TIP Collect Data on Individuals Terminated from Supervision

Data on individuals terminated from supervision is just as important to collect as data on individuals currently under supervision, as it provides a crucial comparison group and can help isolate information that may indicate or help predict failure. In addition to the data that have been collected as part of the screening and assessment processes, information such as the type of termination,[12] reason for revocation, length of supervision, and the risk and supervision level should be recorded for individuals terminated from supervision. These data can help the department understand why people did or didn't succeed while under supervision, and can inform supervision practices in the future.

11. In Travis County, the time to complete an assessment was reduced to about eight hours per case from up to 18 hours under the old pre-sentencing investigation process.

12. For example, were they revoked for negative behavior, such as committing a technical violation or a new offense, or were they released from probation authority for successfully complying with the rules or completing the term of supervision.

Table 2: How Travis County Revised Its Intake and Assessment Procedures

Area	Previous System	Improved System
Screening and Assessment Tools	Screening and assessment tools were redundant. These included pre-sentencing investigation (PSI) reports, risk assessments, substance use and mental health screening tools, and supervision tools.	The agency established a centralized assessment center that conducts a consolidated assessment. One cohesive assessment form integrates all validated assessment tools upon entry into probation supervision; redundant questions have been eliminated.
Risk Assessment Timing	Risk assessments were conducted after conditions of supervision were set, and were rarely used for the development of case supervision strategies.	The agency established integrated screening and assessment, which it conducts before conditions of supervision are set. These are coded into a tiered matrix that reflects criminogenic risk and need and distinguishes "control" and "treatment" supervision conditions.[13]
Reports to the Court	Courts relied heavily on PSI reports, which were duplicative and lacked a cohesive structure. Judges interpreted these PSIs inconsistently because they had lengthy narratives and were not standardized.	Judges receive recommendations in a standardized, structured report built around the results of the validated screening and assessment processes, minimizing lengthy narratives. Salient criminogenic factors are clearly identified in a matrix along a severity-scoring index.
Validating Instruments	No internal mechanism was in place to monitor the use of risk assessment results and regularly test the validity of risk assessment instruments.	Risk assessment tools are now validated and integrated into routine processing prior to sentencing.
Supervision	Supervision was based on current offense, as well as criminal history, and oriented toward compliance with supervision conditions.	Field supervision procedures now require development of an individualized case plan oriented toward addressing the assessed criminogenic risk and need of the individual to reduce recidivism and produce better outcomes.
Probation Caseloads	There weren't enough probation officers trained to supervise all high-risk offenders (the department requires specialized training to supervise this population).	By reducing repetitive paperwork, specially trained officers now have more time to supervise probationers.
Incentives and Sanctions	Sanctions varied, depending on the experience and philosophy of probation officers supervising the case.	Progressive incentives and sanctions schemes are designed to be tailored to each probationer—what motivates that individual—while putting all probationers on notice of the kinds of responses that will follow various acts of noncompliance or offending.

13. A person in the "control" category would have to report more frequently and the officer would make visits in the field more frequently. He or she would receive more required contacts with a probation officer and greater restrictions on where he or she can go. A person in the "treatment" group may be referred to AA or NA.

Checklist for Step 4: Improve Probationer Screening and Assessment Processes

- ✓ Develop or acquire criminogenic risk and need assessment instruments.
- ✓ Validate and norm assessment instruments for supervised population.
- ✓ Inventory all screening and assessment, intake, and field supervision forms and tools, including information from other agencies that could be shared.
- ✓ Chart current screening and assessment processes (using a flow chart) to identify what information is being collected, and at what times.
- ✓ Determine how to reduce redundant data collection processes and questions.
- ✓ Develop an assessment procedures manual that reflects this streamlined process.
- ✓ Focus on how information can be properly shared with all appropriate agencies and individuals to make the most effective use of resources.
- ✓ Collect data on individuals terminated from supervision.

Recommended Reading

DA Andrews and Craig Dowden, "The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model of Assessment and Human Service in Prevention and Corrections: Crime-Prevention Jurisprudence," *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice,* October 2007.

Brad Bogue, Bill Woodward, Nancy Campbell, Mark Carey, Elyse Clawson, Dorothy Faust, Kate Florio, Andrew Goldberg, Lore Joplin, and Billy Wasson, *Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community: Outcome and Process Measures* (Washington, DC: The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, 2005), http://nicic.gov/Library/021041.

James Bonta, "Offender Risk Assessment: Guidelines for Selection and Use," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* Vol. 29 no. 4 (August 2002): 355–79.

Crime and Justice Institute, *Intermediate Measures & Database Handbook and Instruction Manual* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2007), http://www.cjinstitute.org/files/int_measures_%20user_manual_110107.pdf.

Tony Fabelo, Geraldine Nagy, Jose Villarreal, and W. Carsten Andresen, *Measuring Process Efficiency to Improve Probation Management Strategies: Travis Community Impact Supervision Incubation Report IX* (Washington, DC: The JFA Institute, 2007), http://www.co.travis.tx.us/community_supervision/tcis/travisincubator9.pdf.

STEP 5: Align Supervision Plans with Screening and Assessment Results

Even when good screening and assessment practices are in place, in many jurisdictions the results are not always translated into effective caseload management strategies and techniques. Once the screening and assessment practices have been retooled and implemented, the information that is gathered must be used to devise individualized supervision plans. Information from screening and assessment processes by other criminal justice agencies (for example, pre-trial services) should also be provided to the court to guide the determination of conditions of supervision. Probation screening and assessment staff should be available to communicate with judges and respond to their questions when the latter are developing conditions of supervision. Conditions that are required by law should be distinguished from special conditions set by the judge, such as a judge's discretionary condition that a probationer participates in a specific program or provides community service work.

When designing the supervision plan, it is important for probation officials to distinguish which special conditions are designed to help control the probationers' behavior and which are meant to increase participation in treatment or other program interventions. With supervision conditions designed to control behavior ("control conditions"), the probation agency should have a very low tolerance for violations. In contrast, the probation agency may allow for minor infractions of supervision conditions related to the individual's treatment plan ("treatment conditions") without initiating a violation report to the courts.[14] Obviously, the degree to which the probation agency responds to violations of control and treatment conditions depends on the level of risk presented by the probationer's behavior.

A probationer's supervision plan should be individualized based on a thorough classification process. Supervision decisions should not be based on risk level alone. Instead, departments should base the degree of supervision on both criminogenic risk and need. The subcommittee responsible for revamping supervision strategies should develop an assessment matrix or other rational decision-making guide that helps administrators sort probationers into different categories, each of which provides a unique supervision plan based on the assessed risk and need. Whatever categories the department chooses should be labeled simply and in a way that's easy to remember, and should correspond to particular, clearly articulated supervision strategies.

As part of the probation department's revised mission to reduce recidivism, officials should change the measures of success for a probation officer. Specifically, the department should move away from focusing on meeting "contact standards"—the number and type of meetings between an officer and individuals under supervision—

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14. For example, a probationer fails to take some of his or her medication or misses an appointment with a treatment provider.

as a measure of success. It is important that community corrections officers maintain discretion in their interactions with probationers. Rather, probation officers should be required and enabled to spend proportionally more time with those individuals in higher-risk categories.[15]

A probationer's first visit with a probation officer should be scheduled once he or she is assigned a supervision category (in Travis, a yellow, red, or blue assignment) and the court imposes conditions of supervision. The probation officer should use the person's assessment results to discuss those factors that increase the likelihood of

Travis County's Scheme for Relating Supervision Strategies to Assessment

The assessment matrix used by Travis County (see Figure 3) cross-references initial risk scores with assessment scores for needs. This allows the department to separate probationers into three color-coded supervision tiers, ranging from those who are relatively stable (at the low end) to those who demonstrate criminal thinking and orientation (on the high end).

Probationers who score lower in both criminogenic risk and need (yellow category) receive fewer interventions. The expectation is that these probationers will comply with the rules without much need for supervisory involvement. Officers make sure these probationers know the rules they have to follow, address any issues with which they may need assistance, and conduct follow-up reporting. These probationers are placed on a "low risk caseload" with minimal contact requirements. Officers have greater tolerance for minor violations, such as failure to report a change in employment or to report the completion of a GED class. For the mid-range probationers (blue category), the strategies include more reporting requirements and more intensive treatment interventions. Individuals with the highest risk and need (red category) are subject to the most restrictive and intense supervision, including field visits, surveillance programs, and low tolerance for any violations.

Supervision strategies are decided based on the assessment results following standard procedures developed by the department. Judges are well aware of what the supervision strategies entail for each color on the grid, and can modify or add conditions to these strategies as they see fit. There are also "off-the-grid" strategies for certain types of offenses, such as sex offenses, as probationers charged with these crimes often cause special concern for community members. In general, however, judges defer to standardized supervision protocols, as they know these have been designed to provide the best evidence-based practices to match the related assessments.

15. For more on the importance of moving away from contact standards as a benchmark for a department's success, see Amy Solomon, Jenny Osborne, Laura Winterfield, Brian Elderbroom, Peggy Burke, et al., *Putting Public Safety First: 13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, December 2008).

him or her recidivating (e.g., criminogenic risk factors)—such as who he or she spends leisure time with—and his or her needs, such as employment training or substance abuse counseling. At that point, the officer and probationer should start working on a supervision agreement and plan. During the first visit, the officer should work with the probationer to determine the ranking of criminogenic and social service issues and the two sides should come up with some ways to address these issues. During the second visit, the officer, with the input of the probationer, should develop a supervision plan that incorporates criminogenic risk and need information, which the officer will monitor in subsequent contacts. The officer should use "motivational interviewing" techniques to elicit the best responses from the probationer and engage him or her in the behavioral change process.[16] The supervision plan should be revisited after a reassessment is conducted—which takes place either at a scheduled point (e.g., annually), when the individual commits an infraction, or when the individual hits a benchmark in his or her supervision plan.

The supervision subcommittee should consider the size and composition of officers' caseloads. Department administrators typically distribute probationers evenly across

Figure 4: Travis County Supervision Strategies Related to Assessment Scheme

Yellow	Blue	Red
Lowest reporting requirements No need for intensive discretionary programs Applications of low to moderate responses to administrative violations using violation grid Incentives for early discharge	Increased reporting requirements Mix of visits to probation officer and home visits by probation officer as necessary Discretionary programs to address skill/emotional deficits, mainly drug treatment, anger management, and cognitive programs More restrictive responses to administrative violations Incentives to move to "Yellow" on successful reassessment	Highest reporting requirements of all supervision levels, including field visits by probation officer Use of surveillance programs, supplemented by cognitive programs and other programs as needed Most restrictive and swift responses to administrative violations of all supervision levels Incentives to move to "Blue" on successful reassessment but cannot move to "Yellow"
• Overrides allowed based on policy • Sex offenders classified "outside" grid		

16. For more on motivational interviewing, see: http://www.motivationalinterview.org.

caseloads, which limits the discretion individual probation officers have to allocate time among the individuals in their charge. The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) has explored caseload standards for individuals under probation supervision. In general, the number of individuals an officer supervises should decrease if the officer is supervising high-risk/high-need offenders.[iii] That said, there is no ideal caseload size. According to APPA's research, the quality of contacts between probation officers and probationers is more important than the quantity of contacts. Officers with small caseloads comprising only individuals with similar risk levels and social service needs may be better able to detect fluctuations in any criminogenic behaviors or treatment progress and respond in a more targeted, flexible manner than officers with large, mixed caseloads. However, small, dedicated caseloads may not be feasible for all probation departments, such as small departments in rural areas.

Probation departments with the capacity should consider placing some individuals—especially those with serious mental illnesses—on specialized caseloads. Officers working on such caseloads should have significant and sustained specialized training for their caseloads' target population and collaborate extensively with community-based service providers.[iv] Other specialized caseloads can be used to provide a subset of probationers with focused resources such as job training, or to concentrate on sanctions for a specific type of offense.[v]

To help their probationers break the cycle of revocations and re-offending, probation officers should leverage informal networks that can support probationers in the community, including family members, social contacts, and religious groups. These networks may exert positive pressure that effectively inhibit individuals from re-offending, or may provide resources or social relationships that help probationers succeed in the community.[vi] As much as possible, officers should be trained to work with pro-social informal networks to involve them into the case plan. In neighborhoods with a high concentration of probationers, probation leaders (through the supervision subcommittee, which makes recommendations to the executive committee) should

Probationer Assignments in Travis County

In Travis County, officers are assigned probationers using a rotation system. This has an unintended consequence: dozens of probation officers supervise individuals that may be clustered in a single or small number of neighborhoods. For example, in one high-concentration Austin neighborhood, 120 officers supervise 688 probationers. Based on an average caseload size of approximately 100 probationers per officer, the same number of probationers could be supervised by seven officers. A place-based case assignment system for areas with high numbers of probationers—instead of a random rotation system—can improve department efficiency and allow officers to develop expertise in the neighborhood and the resources to which they can refer their probationers.

consider the possibility of deploying officers on a neighborhood basis, so they may become more familiar with some of the resources and programs available in the community. For example, with place-based caseloads, a probation department may assign officers to particular neighborhoods where large numbers of probationers reside to increase efficiency and provide officers with a more comprehensive picture of what is going on in their probationers' lives.

When probation departments develop specialized or place-based caseloads, it is important for staff to have up-to-date inventories of all treatment programs and related resources in the jurisdiction, particularly because the department is not likely to directly operate or fund such services. A subcommittee focusing on programming, along with department staff with prior experience linking their probationers to treatment and other services, should develop a list of available programs and resources, identifying the providers and their goals, eligibility criteria, and the capacity or number of individuals they each serve. This inventory should distinguish between services (such as parenting classes), sanctions (such as short-term incarceration), and treatment programs that address probationers' criminogenic characteristics. For treatment programs, staff should distinguish among programs of different intensity, such as outpatient and inpatient treatment for substance abuse. Staff must also understand any admissions criteria.

To ensure that the programs in which probationers participate will help to reduce their rates of recidivism, the programming subcommittee must familiarize itself with the literature on program quality (or fidelity) review tools. Program quality review tools have been developed for assessing key characteristics of correctional intervention programs to determine how closely the programs adhere to the known principles of effective intervention. Of particular note is the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) developed by the University of Cincinnati.[17] Fidelity review tools are implemented by a team of evaluators who collect data through structured interviews with program staff, observations made through focus groups, and reviews of program documentation. The evaluators then score programs, identify areas of weakness, and make recommendations for improvements. Programs that score high on the CPC are likely to reduce recidivism, whereas those scoring low on the CPC are not.

Once they have conducted a program quality review, the department, through the programming subcommittee, should make necessary adjustments to ensure the quality of programs to which they link probationers. Although probation agencies may have little ability to suggest or impose changes on external programs, at a minimum they should distinguish among possible partners and providers in the community and refer probationers to the most effective programs available. In some cases, the department may be able to partner with the providers or other public agencies that monitor the provision of social services to influence standards. Such partnerships can be realized through the executive committee overseeing the department transformation (see Step 1).

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17. To learn more about the CPC, see http://www.uc.edu/corrections/training.html#ProgramEval.

For example, stakeholders in Missouri found that behavioral health care for probationers varied considerably across the state, and established guidelines that providers needed to meet to receive referrals from the probation department.[vii]

Although fostering linkages to high-quality treatments and services is crucial, it should not come at the expense of the probation department focusing on strategies over which it can exert the most control: improving their own operations and supervision practices and the community corrections practices that are proven to reduce recidivism.

Checklist for Step 5: Align Supervision Plans with Screening and Assessment Results

- ✓ Use screening and assessment results to help inform judges who set conditions of supervision.
- ✓ Classify probationers based on a clear risk and need matrix into categories that correspond with different supervision strategies.
- ✓ Encourage probation officers to tailor supervision agreements and plans to each individual.
- ✓ Modify caseload composition and distribution to determine the benefits of specialized caseloads and to focus resources on high-risk offenders that require the strongest interventions to reduce recidivism.
- ✓ Conduct an inventory and review the quality of programs available to probationers.

Recommended Reading

James Austin, "The Proper and Improper Use of Risk Assessment in Corrections," *Federal Sentencing Reporter* Vol. 16 (February 2004), http://www.jfa-associates.com/publications/pcras/proper%20userand%20misuse%20of%20risk.pdf.

Peggy Burke, "Case Management: A Critical Element of the TPC Model," in *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

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Frank Domurand, *So You Want to Develop Your Own Risk Assessment Instrument* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 1999), http://nicic.gov/Library/period160.

National Institute of Corrections, *A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Department of Justice, 2009), http://www.cepp.com/documents/EBDM%20Framework.pdf.

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Faye S. Taxman, Eric S. Shepardson, Jayme Delano, Suzanne Mitchell, James M. Byrne, Adam Gelb, and Mark Gornik, "Assessment and Planning," in *Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Incorporating Science into Practice* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/020095.

STEP 6: Redesign Incentive and Sanctioning Strategies

In many jurisdictions, probation officers are required by law or department policy to start the probation revocation process when probationers commit a minor or technical violation of the terms of their community sentence. Where probation officers can apply strategies other than revocation, they may not have received appropriate training on how to apply them. Often, agencies lack a cohesive policy on incentives and sanctions that is both clear to all probation officers and is consistently backed by administrators and supported by the judiciary.

Once risk assessment and supervision strategies are aligned and integrated, a subcommittee—comprising staff, judicial officials, and community representatives—should develop incentives and graduated sanctions as well as a process to deploy them. Incentives and graduated sanctions give probation officers a range of responses to probationers' behavior that helps build accountability and discourage recidivism. They also help ensure that each officer responds to violations with a level of swiftness and severity that is directly related to the probationer's risk level and the condition of supervision that has been violated.

Standardizing responses provides a measure of fairness while giving officers necessary flexibility. A low-severity sanction might involve increased monitoring. Higher-severity responses could include placement in a residential treatment facility or a short, immediate jail sanction. (Appendix D provides Travis County's "Violation Response Table," which identifies the different levels of graduated sanctions depending on the type of infraction.)

Responses to an individual's behavior should take into account the individual's risk level. Failure to match sanctions to risk levels can have unexpected results; in particular, targeting low-risk offenders with intensive supervision can actually increase their

likelihood of recidivating.[viii] If probation officers monitor low-risk individuals extremely closely, they may be more likely to detect minor technical violations. Furthermore, frequent reporting to a probation officer may interrupt the very activities that are likely to result in positive behaviors; this may be the case when a probationer has to leave a job to travel to check-ins when compliance was likely in any case. Also, it is common for people with substance use disorders to relapse early in the recovery process; for individuals deemed a low risk of recidivating, this should not automatically require severe sanctions or probation revocation. (Serious sanctions may be in order, however, if such an individual poses a high public safety risk or has a history of dangerous behavior when intoxicated.)

The probation agency should instruct officers to use incentives to promote positive behavior whenever appropriate. Research suggests that using positive incentives alongside punitive sanctions reduces recidivism rates; incentives should be used four times as often as sanctions "to enhance individual motivation toward positive behavior change and reduced recidivism."[ix] Effective and common incentives include early termination from supervision, reduced restitution hours, and reduced contacts with the officer.

The incentives and graduated sanctions subcommittee should develop specific protocols that govern the use of jail as a consequence reserved for serious noncompliance, especially for individuals involved in community-based treatment or social service programs. These protocols should be documented in writing, and should be shared with all stakeholder agencies represented in the transformation initiative. Probation agencies should explore alternatives such as intermediate-sanction facilities or day-reporting centers that are staffed by probation officers as well as community service providers. These facilities' staff support continuity of care and can help prevent further involvement with the criminal justice system.

Probation officers should participate in the subcommittee that designs graduated responses to technical violations. By involving probation officers in this process, department leaders will ensure that line staff understand the reasoning behind department actions. This will help departments promote consistent, effective, and transparent application of graduated responses. Departments implementing incentives and graduated sanctions should issue a comprehensive report enumerating the range of actions (which should be as exhaustive as possible) and the corresponding responses. This report should be shared with partner agencies.

TIP

Changing State Policy to Implement Incentives and Graduated Sanctions

Implementing comprehensive and standardized incentives and sanctions in a jurisdiction where they do not exist will likely involve changes to policy or statute, a complete review of which is beyond the scope of this document. The Pew Center on the States' *Policy Framework to Strengthen Community Corrections* provides detailed suggestions on developing state statutes that authorize probation officers to implement graduated sanctions and incentives.[x]

Checklist for Step 6: Redesign Incentive and Sanctioning Strategies

- ✓ Work with judges, prosecutors, and other stakeholders to develop a range of supported options and new procedures for employing incentives and graduated sanctions that are tailored to probationers' level of criminogenic risk and identified need.
- ✓ Issue a comprehensive report that details the transparent procedures to be followed.
- ✓ Train officers to ensure the procedures are carried out fairly and in swift response to a violation.
- ✓ Emphasize the use of incentives rather than relying exclusively on punitive sanctions.
- ✓ Reserve jail and revocations for the most serious violators, and ensure that supervision continues to be focused on individuals identified as high risk.

Recommended Reading

Center for Effective Public Policy, *Responding to Probation and Parole Violations: A Handbook to Guide Local Policy Development* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2001), http://nicic.gov/Library/016858.

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National Institute of Corrections, *A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems* (Washington, DC: A Collaborative Project among the Center for Effective Public Policy, The Pretrial Justice Institute, and the Justice Management Institute, August 2009).

Faye Taxman, Eric S. Shepardson, Jayme Delano, Suzanne Mitchell, James M. Byrne, Adam Gelb, and Mark Gornik, "Incentives to Shape Offender Behavior," in *Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Incorporating Science into Practice* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/020095.

STEP 7: Develop Recidivism-Reduction Training

Probation departments seeking an increased focus on recidivism reduction must ensure that probation officers provide the motivation that helps probationers change, rather than focusing solely on their compliance with conditions of community sentences. To guide probationers to positive behavior change, probation staff must be trained on the new strategies and priorities brought about by the department's reorientation toward recidivism reduction.

The executive committee should designate a subcommittee to develop a training curriculum and materials. The training subcommittee should first review current training practices and make recommendations for alterations. Working with probation agency leaders, the subcommittee should make recommendations to the executive-level committee on how to link the new training strategies to the overall goals of agency transformation, and should communicate this information to all personnel.

With the input of the training subcommittee, department leaders should set an aggressive training agenda to familiarize personnel with the goals and implications of agency transformation, build skills that will help staff engage and work with probationers, and support the implementation of specific changes to assessment or supervision strategies. The subcommittee should consider developing training to help officers

- Administer a comprehensive criminogenic risk and need assessment, analyze the findings, and translate them into a case management plan;
- Conduct motivational interviews;
- Develop strategies to address relapse; and
- Adopt evidence-based practices, such as establishing "firm but fair" relationships with their probationers that are authoritative, not authoritarian, and characterized by caring, trust, and problem solving (as opposed to relying on threats of incarceration or other negative pressures) to address compliance issues.[xi]

In some cases, training will have to help officers "unlearn" old priorities and practices. For example, probation leaders should recognize that prior to the department undertaking a transformation, most incentives prompted officers to focus on identifying and sanctioning any and all violations. For each of the steps of this guide, officers should learn how that particular activity helps promote the agency's newly adopted mission of recidivism reduction. Unless probation staff members fully understand how departmental goals and training for new skills are connected, it may be more challenging

for them to reorient their daily work. Veteran staff may feel anxious and resist changes to their familiar routines while more recent hires may not know how to accomplish what is expected of them.

TIP Train Alongside Colleagues

Regular unit-based training can build teamwork and ensure that instruction is grounded in actual experiences and realistic examples and adapted to the needs of particular units.

Ongoing skill-based training, critical to ensuring officers perform in a high-quality manner and adhere to new techniques, should be active and participatory, rather than passive—especially for more-seasoned officers. For example, instead of observing a presentation about motivational interviewing, officers should perform practice sessions that are taped and then evaluated for feedback by senior officers or trainers. Training should also give staff a chance to practice hypothetical scenarios (for example, role-playing interactions between officers and their probationers).

The training subcommittee should identify officers throughout the department who excel at these desired skills and enlist them as trainers or coaches for their colleagues. They can also tap the network of stakeholders brought together through the committee structure of the transformation initiative to provide training on topics germane to their expertise.

Staff training should emphasize the important role of the principals, especially the judge, in the supervision strategies that promote positive changes in probationers' behavior and reduced recidivism. Training should provide an opportunity for probation leaders to explain to staff the purpose and value of collaborating with other criminal justice agencies and community groups. Cross-training should also be promoted. Convening a conference or training event for relevant stakeholders across the

Training in Travis County

Travis County probation administrators train officers to ensure that new assessment tools produce the same results regardless of which officers use them. Officers were specifically selected to conduct assessments in the centralized assessment unit based on their presumed ability to engage probationers through motivational interviewing. Then the officers were trained in the scoring of the criminogenic risk and need assessment instruments. At least once per year, officers are provided documents and taped interviews from the same cases as an internal reliability test; the results of the assessment by each officer are then analyzed to determine if they score similar cases the same. Any major discrepancies are highlighted and reviewed to sensitize the officers to areas in which they need to improve their assessment. The officers are also trained to enter collected information directly into a computer database, when possible, to reduce paperwork and time in completing the assessment process.

jurisdiction may enhance understanding of all key roles and objectives, and promote a collective vision regarding the probation agency transformation.

Probation leaders should convey the importance of training to the entire department. Managers, senior staff, and line-level supervisors should also be trained and should regard training and coaching as a central part of their job. Supervisors must have the authority to ask staff to participate in trainings that will address skill deficiencies identified in personnel evaluations.

Checklist for Step 7: Develop Recidivism-Reduction Training

- ✓ Adjust staff training curricula and instruction methods to support new departmental objectives and incorporate judicial perspectives.
- ✓ Help staff members become proficient in techniques used to reduce the likelihood of probationers recidivating and to enhance probationers' motivation.
- ✓ Promote ongoing learning and improvement through the use of peer support, coaches, and mentors.
- ✓ Educate personnel at all levels—line staff, supervisors, managers, and others who will support the agency's new objectives.
- ✓ Promote cross-training opportunities with stakeholders to foster agency transformation objectives and enhance understanding of resources and capabilities.

Recommended Reading

James Bonta, Tanya Rugge, Terri-Lynne Scott, Guy Bourgon, and Anne K. Yessine, "Exploring the Black Box of Community Supervision," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* Vol. 47 (July 2008), 248–70.

Peggy Burke, "Implementing the Model," in *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

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Crime and Justice Institute, *Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Community Corrections: The Principles of Effective Intervention* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/019342.

Implementing Procedures to Ensure Quality and Monitor Progress

The third phase of a department's transformation focuses on setting up systems and procedures to keep the department moving toward the long-term goal of reducing revocations and reoffending. Steps in this phase include devising and putting into practice a process- and outcome-accountability system (Step 8), adapting the personnel evaluation system to reflect recidivism-reduction goals and related operational changes (Step 9), and routinely reviewing the department's progress and setting goals for continuous improvement (Step 10).

STEP 8: Develop and Implement a Process- and Outcome-Accountability System

Probation departments must measure their performance on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are successfully reaching the goals of agency transformation. This is especially true as the number of people on supervision grows and the probation department must stretch its resources and make difficult choices about allocating staff time to meet the demands placed on it. Increasing efficiency and effectiveness requires collecting detailed information at the beginning of the change process to set a baseline (see Step 2), and then collecting additional data over the course of agency transformation to gauge progress.

The department should look at probationer cases and develop a feedback system that routinely provides department leaders with process and outcome data in aggregate. This will enable the department to capture data relevant to its evolving activities and to make course corrections if necessary. These data will help the department answer the following questions:

- Does the department assign probationers to specialized or nonspecialized caseloads consistent with new screening and assessment procedures?
- Are screening and assessment results used to shape or modify supervision plans?
- Are higher-risk probationers supervised more closely than lower-risk individuals?

- When probationers are reassessed (either on a regular schedule, when the probationer hits a benchmark in his or her supervision plan, or if a significant violation occurs) are appropriate changes made to their supervision levels or strategies?
- Are recidivism or revocation rates lower after the department transformation effort commenced?
- If not, should supervision strategies be revised?
- Are there particular neighborhoods where a disproportionate number of probationers live that might warrant a place-based caseload assignment?

An information management subcommittee should review what data are needed and recommend a strategy for integrating such data collection processes into routine operations. This subcommittee may suggest adding data fields to case-processing forms or other existing paperwork, creating new pen-and-paper data forms, or, ideally, implementing or augmenting electronic information management systems. (The degree of integration of data collection into routine operations will depend in large measure on the jurisdiction's technological capacity.)

The information management subcommittee should design reports that enable probation administrators to review key *process* and *outcome* measures regularly. *Process* measures highlight how well procedures are being carried out. They include such measures as the number of individuals screened for criminogenic risk, substance use, mental illness, or other needs; the number who have attended, and how many of those who have completed treatment or social service programs; weekly or monthly contacts each probationer made with an officer and/or service providers; court-ordered fees, fines, or child support collected; and violation reports filed. *Outcome* measures help determine the impact of an initiative. They measure such things as the number and type of probation terminations/revocations, the reasons for violations, rates of re-arrests, and the reasons for re-arrests. Outcome data about participants' improvements in mental health, substance use recovery, or other social service areas also are useful.

Travis County's Process Measures

Officers and managers use a "Process Maintenance Tracking Report" to follow nine to 13 process measures on an ongoing basis. Examples of these process measures include

- the number and percent of cases in which criminogenic risk and need re-assessments are overdue,
- cases in which fee payments have not been made, and
- cases pending a motion to revoke and the average number of days since the violation reports and motions were issued.

Members of the information management subcommittee should use these measures to create a "dashboard" of basic information for the executive committee that measures the progress of the department's transformation. For example, department administrators may want to easily and regularly review aggregate data on the number of cases in which probationers are delinquent on their fees. These data should be presented across the entire department as well as by managerial unit. Individual managers will also be interested in these aggregate reports. They may be more interested in indicators involving officer caseloads, such as which officer has the most high-risk cases or which officer has the most overdue risk reassessments.

In addition to the quantitative process and outcome measures described above, probation departments should make an effort to collect qualitative information as well. Qualitative data enrich the interpretation of the "hard numbers," highlight needed procedural changes, and help maintain the integrity of key processes such as intake and assessment practices. They can also be useful in underscoring the successes and challenges of agency transformation and recidivism-reducing supervision practices. Such data might include measures of officers' dissatisfaction with how time-consuming and difficult it is to implement some new supervision strategies, their satisfaction with other particular procedures, and probationers' ratings of the quality of supervision and services they receive. For example, the Maricopa County Probation Department tracks probationers' perception of the quality of their department's services; this provides the department with feedback on issues that may need to be addressed.[xii] To analyze and distribute this data, the information management subcommittee should develop feedback protocols.

A probation department undergoing transformation requires basic research capacity. Researchers can either be in-house personnel trained in research methods or contracted professionals from a local university or one of the several technical assistance centers that provide such services.

Travis County's Research Division

The Travis County Community Supervision and Corrections Department has a research division that looks at the quality of processes that have been adopted by the department every year. Researchers test adherence to the evidence-based practices approved through its planning process, especially in the areas of assessment and the use of graduated sanctions. This process helps the department better match conditions of supervision to probationers' assessment results, enhances the quality of supervision by promoting better interactions between probation officers and probationers, and equips officers to better respond to violations using graduated sanctions.[xiii] The research division then analyzes data from a sample of cases and presents it to the managers to make adjustments in practices as needed. (See Appendix E for the forms Travis County uses to collect data from the case files to measure fidelity to key protocols.)

Checklist for Step 8: Develop and Implement a Process- and Outcome-Accountability System

- ✓ Develop or contract for research expertise.
- ✓ Use an information management subcommittee to make recommendations.
- ✓ Agree on process and outcome measures to track progress on goals and objectives.
- ✓ Identify available process and outcome data and identify missing data, as well as any new or revised procedures for collection.
- ✓ Develop a baseline for later data comparisons to trace improvements.
- ✓ Develop a format and process for the data report's release and distribution that is tailored to line-level, managerial, and administrative needs.
- ✓ Analyze caseload assignments and adherence to risk- and need-driven supervision strategies to identify opportunities for reallocating cases and supervision resources.
- ✓ Develop routine fidelity studies to determine if actual practices are matching the protocols for the evidence-based practices that the department has instituted.
- ✓ Collect qualitative data from personnel, probationers, and stakeholders and develop feedback protocols among key personnel regarding report results.

Recommended Reading

Crime and Justice Institute, "The Responsivity Principle 4," in *Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Community Corrections: The Principles of Effective Intervention* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/019342.

Meghan Howe and Lore Joplin, *Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Community Corrections: Quality Assurance Manual* (Washington, DC: Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, 2005), http://nicic.gov/Library/021258.

Peggy McGarry and Becki Ney, "Document and Assess All the Resources Available to You," in *Getting It Right: Collaborative Problem Solving for Criminal Justice* (Washington, DC: Center for Effective Public Policy, 2006), http://nicic.gov/Downloads/PDF/Library/019834.

STEP 9: Retool the Personnel Evaluation System to Reinforce Agency-wide Recidivism-Reduction Efforts

Probation departments often have well-developed personnel evaluation systems, but they typically measure whether staff made the necessary number of contacts with probationers rather than whether these contacts resulted in fewer revocations or new offenses. Probation officers should be evaluated on activities that are critical to reducing recidivism, such as their ability to engage and motivate probationers to participate in their supervision plans and change their behaviors. Officers in a department focused on recidivism reduction should serve as case managers, liaisons between the department and the community, and effective brokers of services.

The personnel evaluation system should reinforce the changes taking place in the probation department by promoting officers' positive attitudes and skills that are critical to managing probationers' varying levels of risk and need. (See Table 3, page 38, which identifies potential criteria for evaluating personnel.) Evaluations should foster skills such as good interpersonal communication; efficiency in casework; applying new problem-solving strategies and techniques; and establishing relationships characterized by caring, firmness, fairness, and trust. The new evaluation system should measure the results of casework and supervision strategies, rather than simply measuring an officers' tendency to follow procedures and complete paperwork. Evaluations should be tailored to reflect the distinct responsibilities and related skills associated with different staff positions—e.g., probation officers, managers, and counselors. Probation officers should not be evaluated on any new standards or skills for which they have not yet been explicitly trained (see Step 7).

The executive committee should task a personnel evaluation subcommittee with developing consensus among stakeholders, including employees at all levels of the probation department, around a new evaluation system that measures these skills. Although developing an evaluation system for probation officers is its top priority,

Modifications to Evaluation Forms in Travis County

When the Travis County probation department fully implemented the four recidivism reduction practices (described in the introduction), the percentage of "paperwork- or process-related tasks" in probation officers' performance evaluation forms decreased from 78 percent of the evaluation items to 42 percent. The "casework-related tasks" increased from 22 percent in the prior personnel evaluation protocols to 58 percent in the new ones.[xiv]

Table 3: Examples of Improved Personnel Evaluation Domains and Metrics

Table 3 identifies some of the domains and metrics by which personnel might be evaluated once the probation department has adopted the principles of recidivism reduction.

Domain	Examples of Metrics
Communication	• Uses strong verbal and written communication skills • Collaborates effectively with other team members • Clearly articulates expectations to probationers and maintains transparent processes
Problem Solving	• Collects relevant data • Defines problems • Identifies and considers possible solutions • Involves partners and identifies resources in crafting and implementing solutions • Follows up on critical issues and determines effectiveness of responses
Initiative	• Looks for opportunities to improve performance and stays current on new information and emerging issues • Takes needed action and works cooperatively with colleagues • Champions new projects or strategies
Casework	• Develops effective supervision plans that reflect results of screenings and assessments and respond to identified treatment and service needs • Provides quality day-to-day supervision that focuses on advancing recidivism-reduction goal rather than just compliance • Uses graduated sanctions and incentives properly
Commitment	• Supports department's mission and values • Tries new ways of doing business to advance department goals

How Travis County Adapted to New Personnel Evaluations

The Travis County Community Supervision and Corrections Department initially used the old and new personnel evaluations simultaneously for an entire year, but only "counted" the old evaluation. This signaled to officers the sort of evaluation they'd be receiving in the future without introducing the new measures too abruptly.

this subcommittee should also seek to update the evaluation system for managers, administrative staff, and others involved in the department's efforts to improve success rates among probationers and reduce recidivism.

Before adopting the new evaluation system, the department should consider piloting any changes that require supervisors to observe and audit staff. In all likelihood, the new evaluation system's focus on both communication and effective casework requires an evaluator to directly observe an officer in action. This may appear to be a more subjective analysis; for example, answering the question of how effectively officers help probationers solve their specific and unique challenges—from arranging transportation and social service appointments to maintaining abstinence from illegal substances—requires a degree of professional experience and insight. Special attention should be placed on developing solid observation and auditing procedures so that the legitimacy of the evaluation process is not compromised.

Implementing a new personnel evaluation system may take longer than other steps described in this guide. (In some jurisdictions, it required as many as two years of the personnel evaluation subcommittee's work to collect input from key personnel and build consensus.) A deliberately measured pace should help staff understand that the changes to the evaluation system will not be sudden and arbitrary; it gives officers time to understand and adapt to the new standards that will be valued and rewarded by the department.

Checklist for Step 9: Retool the Personnel Evaluation System to Reinforce Agency-wide Recidivism-Reduction Efforts

- ✓ Assign a subcommittee to help review current personnel performance evaluation systems and make recommendations for change.
- ✓ Agree on domains and measures that will reveal whether probation officers' skills, attitudes, and activities support recidivism reduction and are consistent with training and other department goals.
- ✓ Develop a new personnel performance evaluation system for probation officers that uses a transparent process.
- ✓ Tailor evaluations for different personnel to reflect their roles and responsibilities, including managers, probation officers, and administrative staff.
- ✓ Make changes to the personnel performance evaluation system for administrative staff that responds to staff concerns.
- ✓ Pilot the new evaluation system.
- ✓ Plan for a gradual transition to full implementation after addressing issues raised in pilot-testing.

Recommended Reading

Peggy Burke, "Implementing the Model," in *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

Crime and Justice Institute, "Appendix F: Structural Supports for Change," in *Implementing Evidence-Based Principles in Community Corrections: Leading Organizational Change and Development* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/019344.

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STEP 10: Review Progress and Set Goals for Continuous Improvement

It is important for probation leaders and their partners to have realistic expectations for the duration of time it will take to transform the department. Successfully completing the process of change, which affects so many components of the department, will likely take more than two years. Furthermore, it is fair to say that the project is never "completed," as the department will make numerous adjustments long after the subcommittees have adjourned. Because of the ongoing nature of this work, the department should plan to evaluate progress at several intervals after the formal conclusion of the transformation effort—for example, two years down the road.

In light of the prolonged nature of this work, to keep staff motivated and committed it is important that department officials offer praise for measurable progress toward the long-term goal of transforming into a department focused on recidivism reduction. During the transformation, leaders should characterize the department as a "learning organization" or an organization that examines key operations routinely to continue growing and evolving.

As part of its ongoing review process, the department should compare current data on its established performance measures (see Step 8) to the baseline data collected at the outset (see Step 2), and identify successes and areas requiring further work. The

TIP Celebrate Interim Successes

If staff do not feel that aspects or phases of the agency transformation efforts are "completed," they may become frustrated and feel less compelled to continue the process. Once the early and intensive efforts to change the department's basic structure and culture have been accomplished, staff can celebrate as they meet certain milestones.

information management subcommittee should highlight the major accomplishments that the department has achieved and present this information to department leaders, who in turn should promote these findings internally and externally. Reductions in recidivism should be highlighted, as should any other interim indication that the department is moving in the right direction. As stated previously, the subcommittee, on behalf of department administrators, should commission or conduct routine "fidelity studies" to determine if the new processes adopted are implemented faithfully.

TIP Find Successes, Even in Setbacks

It is important to remember that in many cases the lessons learned from challenges and setbacks can be framed as accomplishments, especially when course corrections are made as a result.

Any goals and objectives on which the department has fallen short should be openly acknowledged, and a work plan and timeline to accomplish them should be developed. This transparency exemplifies what it means to be a learning organization. Along the same lines, each step within this guide should be revisited periodically by probation leaders and the executive committee formed at the outset, as informed by the subcommittees, to ensure that all aspects of the department's activities are geared toward reducing recidivism and are working in concert. The department should commit

Outcomes from Travis County

Early results from the first comprehensive outcome study of the Travis County experience conducted in mid-2009 were promising.[xv] Travis County experienced the steepest decline in felony probation revocations among Texas's most-populous counties between 2004 and 2009, according to the year-end 2009 performance measuring report by the state agency overseeing the probation system. Felony probation revocations declined in Travis County by 20 percent during this period, compared to declines of 3 percent to 16 percent in six other counties and increases of up to 65 percent in three other counties.[xvi]

Other internal tracking done by the Travis County Community Supervision and Corrections Department shows the percentage of felony probationers revoked for administrative reasons declining from a high of 54 percent before the full implementation of the evidence-based practices model in fiscal year 2004 to 36 percent in fiscal year 2010, and the number of felons absconding at the end of August 2010 declining by 50 percent from the same period in 2004.[18]

18. Internal tracking reports are available from the Travis County Community Supervision and Corrections Department, http://www.co.travis.tx.us/community_supervision/default.asp.

to regularly considering policy and administrative changes, performing self-evaluations, and making adjustments whenever needed.

Probation leaders should regularly involve stakeholders, through the executive committee, to review progress and set goals for further improvement. High-ranking officials serving on the executive committee should also identify opportunities for reaching out to the media and elected and appointed officials who may be instrumental in shaping public opinion and funding for the probation agency. Publicly released status reports can also generate broad-based support for connecting probationers to community-based treatments and services.

Checklist for Step 10: Review Progress and Set Goals for Continuous Improvement

- ✓ Design a process for continually improving the agency's efforts—with a particular focus on maintaining the fidelity of the assessment process to evidence-based practices and ensuring supervision strategies are guided by assessment results.
- ✓ Evaluate department progress several years after the implementation of agreed-upon changes.
- ✓ Recognize and celebrate improvements revealed by performance measures.
- ✓ Identify next steps to continue improving the organization.
- ✓ Analyze yearly trends and conduct periodic recidivism outcome evaluations.
- ✓ Report accomplishments and remaining goals to stakeholders and the public, including the media and elected officials, to encourage support and understanding.

Recommended Reading

Peggy Burke, "Implementing the Model," in *TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2008), http://nicic.gov/Library/022669.

Crime and Justice Institute, *Implementing Evidence-based Principles in Community Corrections: Leading Organizational Change and Development* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://nicic.gov/Library/019344.

Conclusion

After going through the transformation process to refocus its mission away from strictly monitoring probationer compliance and toward reducing recidivism, a probation department will function more efficiently and probationer outcomes will be improved. The department will operate more seamlessly as a whole. Thorough and effective assessments of probationers' criminogenic risk, need, and strengths (protective factors) will inform supervision strategies that are tailored to each probationer. Officers will respond to probationer behavior with incentives and graduated sanctions that are applied swiftly and without ambiguity. Meanwhile, the overall architecture of transformation will be supported by new performance-driven personnel management practices that promote and reward recidivism reduction. In all, these changes will lift morale among both officers and probationers.

The 10 steps enumerated in this guide provide a blueprint for implementing the principles of recidivism reduction—from effective assessments to revised personnel management practices. They should be overseen by a committee-subcommittee structure that fosters buy-in from department staff as well as collaboration with key stakeholder agencies and community partners. The virtues of this committee-subcommittee structure are numerous; in particular, they allow the department to pursue the 10 steps concurrently, rather than sequentially. This will allow the department to make progress and to realize success more quickly than it otherwise might.

This overview of the 10 steps for a probation department is meant to be a starting point. Volumes could be written on each step, but it is hoped that this concise guide and its recommended resources will position probation agencies to make more effective use of their resources.

The lessons learned from the experience and research conducted in the Travis County probation department in Austin, Texas, demonstrates that full-scale transformation efforts are possible. How they implemented processes that gained widespread acceptance internally and externally can serve as a useful template for other jurisdictions interested in creating an integrated model that can help probationers avoid criminal activity and lead healthy, productive lives.

Notes

i. Pew Center on the States, *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, March 2009).

ii. Mike Eisenberg, *Validation of Risk Assessment Factors* (Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Community Justice Assistance Division, April 2005); Tony Fabelo and Jason Bryl, *Travis County Risk Score Validation and Related Analysis: Report One* (Washington, DC: The JFA Institute, 2006); Tony Fabelo and Jason Bryl, *Travis County Risk Score Validation: Updated Analysis with Additional Cases, Report Two* (Washington, DC: The JFA Institute, 2006).

iii. Bill Burrell, *Caseload Standards for Probation and Parole* (Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole Association, 2006), http://nicic.gov/Library/021896; M. T DeMichele, *Probation and Parole's Growing Caseloads and Work Allocation: Strategies for Managerial Decision Making,* (Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole Association, 2007), http://www.appa-net.org/eweb/docs/appa/pubs/SMDM.pdf.

iv. Seth J. Prins and Laura Draper, *Improving Outcomes for People with Mental Illnesses under Community Corrections Supervision: A Guide to Research-Informed Policy and Practice* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009); Seth Prins and Fred C. Osher, *Improving Responses to People with Mental Illnesses: The Essential Elements of Specialized Probation Initiatives* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009).

v. National Institute of Corrections Information Center, *Essay: Specialized Caseloads* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 1989).

vi. Faye S. Taxman, Eric S. Shepardson, and James M. Byrne. *Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Incorporating Science into Practice* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2004), http://www.nicic.org/Library/020095; Peggy B. Burke and Michael Tonry, *Successful Transition and Reentry for Safer Communities: A Call to Action for Parole* (Silver Spring: Center for Effective Public Policy, 2006).

vii. Peggy Burke, *The TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Handbook* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections and the Center for Effective Public Policy, 2008).

viii. Edward Latessa, Lori Brusman Lovins, and Paula Smith, *Follow-up Evaluation of Ohio's Community Based Correctional Facility and Halfway House Programs—Outcome Study* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Center for Criminal Justice Research, February 2010); Christopher Lowenkamp and Ed Latessa, "Increasing the Effectiveness of Correctional Programming Through the Risk Principle: Identifying Offenders for Residential Placement," *Criminology and Public Policy 4*(2) (2005): 263–90.

ix. Crime and Justice Institute, *Implementing Evidence-Based Policy and Practice in Community Corrections,* second edition (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2009), http://www.cjinstitute.org/files/ Community_Corrections_BoxSet_Oct09.pdf.

x. The Public Safety Performance Project of the Pew Center on the States, *Policy Framework to Strengthen Community Corrections* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2008).

xi. Seth J. Prins and Laura Draper, *Improving Outcomes for People with Mental Illnesses under Community Corrections Supervision: A Guide to Research-Informed Policy and Practice* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009).

xii. R. Cherkos, J. Ferguson, and A. Cook, "Do We Really Care What Offenders Think?" *Perspective 32,* 2008, 53–58.

xiii. Carsten Andresen, "Study to Test the Fidelity to Evidence Based Practices: Travis County Adult Probation," July 31, 2009; and "The Second Annual Study to Test the Fidelity to Evidence Based Practices: Travis County Adult Probation," March 4, 2010.

xiv. Dawn Marie Heikkila, *Travis Community Impact Supervision Model: The Challenges of Implementing a Personnel Evaluation System under an Evidence-Based Practices Probation Supervision Mode* (Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Master Thesis, December 2008).

xv. Mike Eisenberg, Jason Bryl, and Tony Fabelo, *Travis County Community Impact Supervision Project: Analyzing Initial Outcomes* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009).

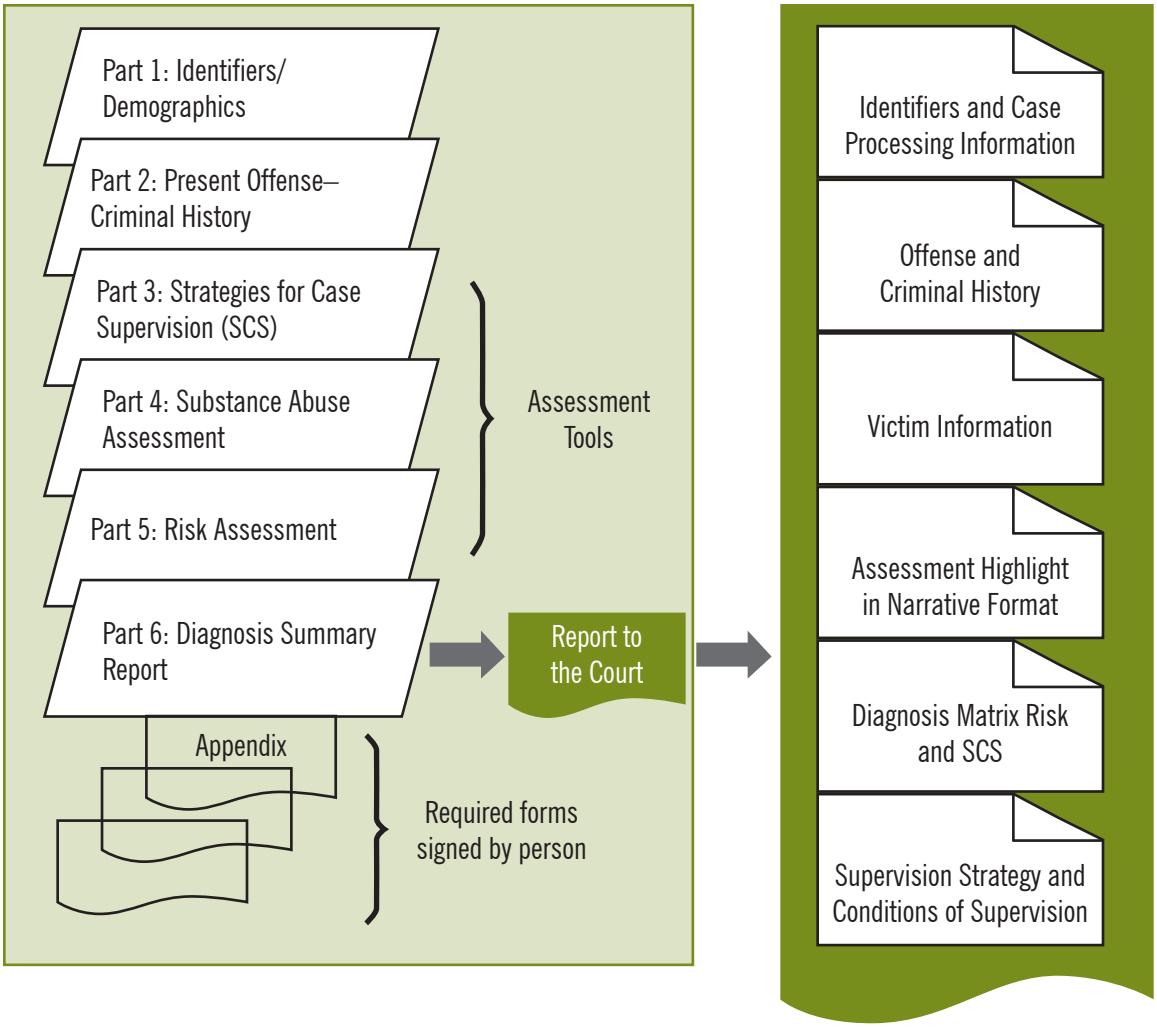
xvi. Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Community Justice Assistance Division, "Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board on the Monitoring of Community Supervision Diversion Funds," December 2009, http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/publications/cjad/cjad-publications-home.htm.

Appendix A: Sample Subcommittee Work Plan

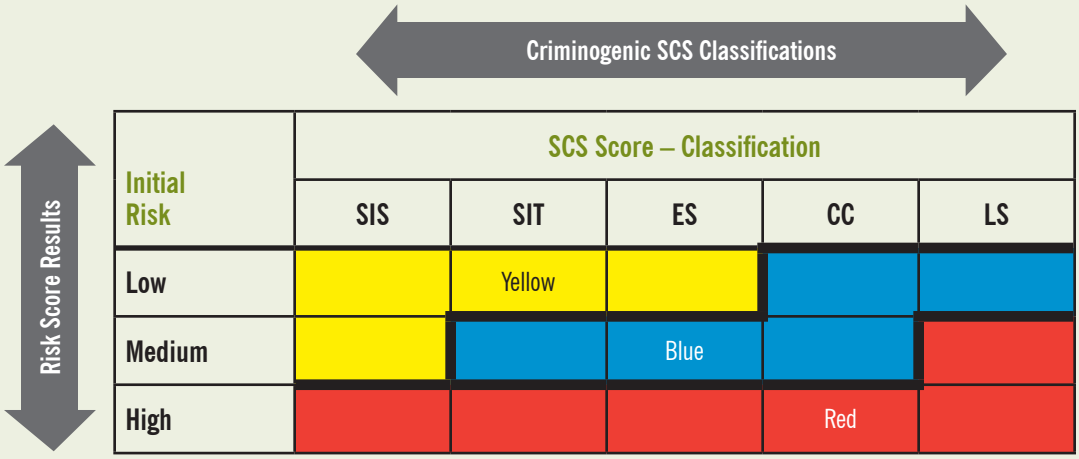
Diagnosis Committee	
Administrator Responsible	Name (member of Steering Committee)
Goal of Committee	Review Assessment Process and Develop New Diagnosis Process
Committee Chair	Name (person in-charge of committee)
Committee Names	Names

Action Item	Responsibility	Start Date	Completion Date	Status
Collect diagnosis and intake forms use throughout the department, identifying which units use which forms and the flow of paper work through the units	Joe Doe, Margaret Doe	10/25/05	11/15/05	Completed on time
Review all forms and flow chart the intake and diagnosis process	TA team working with Joe Doe and Margaret Doe	11/15/05	12/15/05	Completed on time
Committee meeting to review flow chart and agree on strategy to streamline paperwork and consolidation in one form and Central Diagnosis Unit	Committee and TA team	12/20/05	12/20/05	Completed on time
Recommendation to redesign of paperwork flow and consolidation of forms to streamline paper processing	Committee and TA team	12/20/05	~~1/25/06~~ 2/10/06	Completed at later date because review of legal issues related to consent forms delay process
Redesign of forms and streamlining recommendations to Executive Committee for preliminary approval	Administrator assigned to committee	2/10/06	~~2/21/06~~ 3/2/06	Completed later due to Executive Committee longer review process
Creation of draft of Central Diagnosis Form	Joe Doe with Committee and TA Team help	3/2/06	6/1/06	In Process
Testing of new Central Diagnosis Form	Joe Doe working with PSI staff	6/1/06	8/1/06	
Final modification and adoption of Central Diagnosis Form and plan to create Central Diagnosis Unit	Joe Doe working committee and TA Team	8/1/06	9/1/06	
Development of specification for automating the Diagnosis Form	TA Team with IT staff and committee	9/1/06	10/1/06	
Testing of new automated system, certification and recommendation for start date for new diagnosis process pending other committees	TA Team with IT staff and committee	10/1/06	1/1/07	

Appendix B: Structure of Travis County Central Assessment Report



Appendix C: Travis County Risk and Criminogenic Assessment Matrix



SCS Classification	Characteristics
SIS = Selective Intervention Situational	Generally law-abiding individual
SIT = Selective Intervention Treatment	Individual unstable in one area like substance abuse
ES = Environmental Structure	Individual with impaired intellectual ability and poor life skills
CC = Casework Control	Individual with chronic instability in several areas of life
LS = Limit Setting	Individual with criminal orientations

Note: Criminogenic classifications from Client Management Classification (CMC)/Strategies For Case Supervision (SCS) instrument, Strategies for Case Supervision, Twelfth CJAD Edition, Revised January 2000.

Appendix D: Sample Violation Response Table

Travis County Community Supervision and Corrections Department: Violation Response Table

(LEAST SEVERE)	**Level 1 Sanctions**	Behavioral contract	PO has authority to choose from Level 1 or 2 Sanctions without Supervisory approval so long as PO follows Guidelines for Graduated Violations and sanction **does not** involve jail time.
		Offender writes a letter of apology to victim	
		Offender submits itinerary	
		Verbal admonishment by the PO	
		Verbal admonishment by the Senior Probation Officer	
		Verbal admonishment by the Supervisor	
		Letter of Reprimand	
		Increased reporting to PO/field visits for specified amount of time	
		Financial budget with receipts to verify income and expenses	
		Community service hours with department work crew	
		Increase number of NA or AA meetings attendance	
		Referral to counseling or psychological evaluation	
		Second referral to alcohol or drug education program	
		More restrictive curfew	
	Level 2 Sanctions	Referral for job placement or Texas Workforce Commission	
		Referral to GED	
		Referral to TAIP	
		Referral to anger management counseling	
		Referral to family violence counseling	
		Referral to cognitive program	
		Referral to parenting classes	
		Referral to psychological evaluation	
		Referral to TAIP or MHMR assessment	
		Increase in outpatient treatment level	
		Increase length of treatment/cognitive program	
		Increase in number of community service hours	
		Increase frequency of alcohol and drug testing	
		Increase frequency of home, field, collateral, or treatment contacts by PO	

(MOST SEVERE)	**Level 3 Sanctions**	Placement on specialized caseload	Supervisory/Administrative Hearing (Must Follow Required Court Procedures—e.g., Amended Conditions)
		Electronic monitoring	
		Sex offender computer monitoring	
		Inclusion of the SCRAM device	
		Residential treatment	
		Extension of probation term	
		Add additional fine for conversion of CSR @ $10.00 per hour	
		Amend conditions with added restrictions/ requirements/interventions/ referrals	
		Inclusion of Ignition Interlock System	
		Inclusion of driving restriction	
		Increase in number of community service hours	
		Verbal admonishment by Judge (Summons)	
		Placement in SMART or other CCF	
		1–3 day jail commitment (Bench Warrant)	
	Level 4 Sanctions	Issuance of a Bench Warrant	Violation Report with Revocation Review Committee
		Placement in high risk regular caseload w/ zero tolerance	
		Extension of probation term	
		Placement in the residential substance abuse treatment	
		Placement into the Intermediate Sanction Facility	
		Jail time as a condition of probation	
		Placement into the SAFPF	
		Placement into the SAFPF Relapse Program	
		Placement in the State Boot Camp	
		Automatic motion for revocation/adjudication	

Recommendations outside of guidelines for level 3 or level 4 must be staffed and approved by the Court via a modification of conditions

Appendix E: Travis County's Fidelity Study Data Collection Forms

TRAVIS COUNTY ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Individual Felony Case File Review Form

January, 2009 – Placements: Review Period _January – June 2009

Offender:_____

Date of Birth:_____ Age:_____

Gender:_____ SID No:_____

Highest grade:_____

Supervising PO:_____ Unit:_____

Caseload Type:_____
(use attached code)

Court:_____

Cause No:_____

Employed:

2008	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Employed Y/N						

Offense: _____

Offense Code:_____

Date of Probation:_____

Sentence: _____

Shock: No

ASSESSMENT-RISK/NEED/SCS/DOMAINS

Initial Field Risk/Needs Scores: Date:_____
__R___N _____Level
No Score Explain_____

Reassement completed Date:_____

_____R _____N _____level

Significant Event noted ☐ Yes ☐ No

SCS completed

Type/Score: _SI ES CC _LS

Comments (explain any discrepancies between PSI SCS score and the Field SCS score):

_____
_____
_____

1. Address Changes		7.Prior Supervision	
2.Employment Percent		8.Prior Revocations	
3.Alcohol use		9.Prior Felony Adj.	
4.Drug use		10.Adult Adj. for Thefts.	
5.Attitude		11. Assaultive Adj.	
6.Age of Guilt			

Intial Risk scores

Most Recent Reassessment

1. Address Changes		7.Prior Supervision	
2.Employmen t Percent		8.Prior Revocations	
3.Alcohol use		9.Prior Felony Adj.	
4.Drug use		10.Adult Adj. for Thefts.	
5.Attitude		11. Assaultive Adj.	
6.Age of Guilt			

Notes: (any diffenence in PSI/Initial Assessment) if yes Explain:

	PSI Recommendation	Original Order	Referral Date	Completed X=Yes	Amended Ct Order	Referral Date	Completed X=Yes	Officer Referrals Not Ct ordered
Assessment -								
CES								
Family Violence								
Assessment - MHMR								
Post Sentence								
Psychological/iatric								
TAIP								
Caseload, i.e. Spec.								
CSR								
Classes -								
Achieve								
Anger Management								
Drug - 15								
DWI – 12								
DWI – 30								
GED								
Parenting								
Theft								
Incarceration								
CCF								
Jail Serve County								
SAFPF								
State Jail								
TDCJ-ID								
SAFPF - Halfway Hs								
SAFPF - Travis Cty								
Incarceration - SAFPF								
Surveillance								
ELM								
Ignition Interlock								
SCRAM								
Treatment								
Cognitive								
Cognitive Relapse								
Counseling Center								
In-Patient								
Out-Patient								
SOMP								
SMART Facility								
AA/CA/NA-support groups								
Other_____								

List any other specifics about conditions not include above:

_____

_____

List any waivers of fees or other conditions of probation:

_____

_____

Requirements Per Conditions/Assessment

Treatment Required Yes□ No□
Treatment attended Yes□ No□
External Vendor □ Counseling Center □
Other:_____

Reports/Collaterals documented in file Yes□ No□

Comments:

Actual Reporting/Contacts

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Office Visits											
Field Visits											
Court Vists											
Collaterals/Phone Calls											
Totals:											

Supervision Agreement

Filed in case file No□ Yes□
Signed by Probationer No□ Yes□

Negotiated No□ Yes□
W/I 60 DAYS No□ Yes□ **if not, how long:**_____

Crimonogenic needs identified? □ No □Yes □N/A

Are Domains the same per PSI
No□ Yes□

Domains
1.
2.
3.

Comments: If Domains Different is reason explained?

Notes for Misd:

Supervision/Use of MI

Do the circumstances of the case/offender warrant the of MI No□ Yes □

If YES, Does PO use MI? Never 0 1 2 3 4 5 Always

0 = No evidence of use of MI
1 = Use of MI limited to one instance documented in case file
2 = Use of MI limited to two instances – initial ov/supervision plan, not carried through in subsequent visits, as applicable.
3 = Use of MI found in several instances and in different forms
4 = Use of MI consistently used from initial ov and carried through to subsequent visits, also use of MI in different forms
5 = Use of MI reflected almost all categories listed below, from visit, to visit, as applicable to defendant's stage of change, etc.

Use of EPE guideline/EPE approach
PO uses collaborative approach
PO clarifies dual role & ▲'s autonomy
Use of OARs
Probationer leads and problems solves
Recognize/elicit change talk
▲'s motivation for change explored
Use of change tools (e.g. pros/cons list)
Stage of Change for ▲ identified

Is Supervision Agreement foundation for office visits? Yes □ No □
Do Office Visits document discussion specific to Criminogentic Need areas? Yes □ No □
Is ▲ compliant w/goals in Supervision Agreement? Yes □ No □

Referrals:
Are referrals responsive to age, gender, SCS, Risk, etc. Yes □ No □ Court Orders Yes □ No □ P.O.Initiated □ Yes □No

Comments: **Notes: for changes after June, 2009**

Violations/Sanctions/Incentives

Violations **Type:** **Violation Level: (1, 2, 3 or 4)** **Level Applied:**

Rush VR □ Yes □No **Summons ordered** □ Yes □No **Warrant Ordered** □ Yes □ No **Why do we care about summons/warrant?**

Fees	□	___	___
CSR	□	___	___
FTR	□	___	___
Tmt	□	___	___
Class	□	___	___
Other _____		___	___
_____			

Violations addressed timely? □ **Yes** □ **No** **Recommendations**_____

How: MTR □ Yes □ No Date_____
Admin Hearing □ Yes □ No Date_____
Sup Hearing □ Yes □ No Date_____
Admonished □ Yes □ No Date_____

Court Guidelines/Sanctions Model Followed? □ Yes □ No
If No, explain specific action taken as violation response in comments, below

Incentives used appropriately? □**Yes** □ **No**
Comments:

Test Date	**Test Type**	**By**	**Results**	**Positive For**

Total tests administered

ACTION TAKE AFTER THIS REVIEW PERIOD

How: MTR □ Yes □ No Date_____ _____
Admin Hearing □ Yes □ No Date_____ _____
Sup Hearing □ Yes □ No Date_____ _____
Admonished □ Yes □ No Date_____ _____

Court Guidelines/Sanctions Model Followed? □ Yes □ No
If No, explain specific action taken as violation response in comments, below

Case

Summary Questions:

DIAGNOSIS

Was the Diagnosis Correct? □ **Yes** □ **No**
Risk Correct? □ **Yes** □ **No**
Domains Correct ? □ **Yes** □ **No**
If Not what should it have been? **comments:**_____
What was the consequence of the incorrect Diagnosis, Risk, Domains? **Comments:**_____

CONDITIONS OF PROBATION

Were the Conditions of Probation appropriate to the Diagnosis and Risk? □ **Yes** □ **No**
If not what should they have been? Comments:_____
What was the consequence of the incorrect conditions of probation?_____

SUPERVISION

Was the Supervision Appropriate?_____
If not what should have been the appropriate supervision?_____

VIOLATIONS

Were the Violations address appropriately?_____
If not what how should they have been addressed? _____

Notes of all actions from July to end of audit period:

Additional Information/Comments:_____

_____

Staff:_____ **Date:**_____

Appendix F: Travis County's Subcommittee Structure

Steering Committee

- Monitors Work Plans and Timelines for Committees
- Set Priorities
- Develops and Administers Department-Wide and Outside Communication Strategies

Diagnosis Committee

- Design New Diagnosis Process
- Design New Assessment/Diagnosis Forms and Streamline Forms
- Guide Validation Research
- Guide Testing of New Process

Staff Development Committee

- Review Training Competencies and Gaps
- Make Recommendations to Realign Training with Goals of EBP
- Start Training Related to EBP Skills

Supervision Committee

- Conduct Inventory of Programs
- Develop EBP Conditions of Supervision
- Design for EBP Supervision Strategies
- Plan to Match New Diagnosis Strategies to Conditions of Supervision and Supervision Strategies

Quality Control Committee

- Review Available Management Reports and Their Purposes
- Identify More Relevant Process Measures
- Identify More Relevant Outcome Measures
- Recommend New Reporting Structure

Sanctions Committee

- Review and Redesign of Absconder Policies
- Design Plan for Progressive Sanctions
- Design Judicial Engagement Strategy for Progressive Sanctions

Personnel Evaluation Committee

- Review Personnel Evaluation Forms and Policies
- Develop Personnel Evaluation Indicators Related to EBP and Strategies to Measure Them
- Develop Implementation and Internal Support Strategies

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