

2016 CSAC Challenge Awards – Riverside County Probation Department

TRANSITION AND REENTRY UNIT (TRU)

Overview: The primary objective of TRU is to reduce the violation rate of offenders failing to report to Probation upon their release from county jail. (25 word summary)

Challenge: With the reality of jail overcrowding in Riverside County, Probation Department staff took a close look at offenders failing to report after release from custody. Between October 2013 and September 2014, the Department filed about 7,500 technical violations of supervision. Approximately 35 percent, or 2,625, were for failing to report to Probation Officers. As such, the Probation Department chose to focus on methods to improve engagement with offenders at a much earlier stage of intervention, in an effort to reduce the number of violations.

Innovative Solution: Utilizing a comprehensive approach to offender reentry, which incorporates evidenced-based practices and agency collaboration, TRU commences during the offenders' incarceration and continues after their release. TRU guidelines are as follows:

Step 1: TRU staff coordinates with the Sheriff's Department to establish a list of eligible releases pursuant to 1170(h) PC (offenders with release dates within the next six months).

Step 2: The eligibility list is reviewed by TRU Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) for offenders that meet program criteria, which includes a minimum of 90 days custody time, a minimum of 90 days probation supervision, Riverside County residency, and no pending felony holds or warrants.

Step 3: Eligible offenders are evaluated by a TRU DPO via the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) risk/needs assessment. A dynamic case plan is created with the offender, which guides them throughout the rehabilitative process. The emphasis is to reduce the offender's risk of reoffending by targeting their criminogenic needs with Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-lined goals, also referred to as S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Step 4: TRU DPOs screen offenders via the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale (URICA) to determine their readiness level for change. This is completed in a pre- and post-test format. The pre-test is conducted

during week two of the program. The post-test is conducted with each offender one week prior to their scheduled release from custody.

Step 5: Offenders also utilize Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, as facilitated by their TRU DPOs. Courage to Change (C2C) Interactive Journals are selected for each offender based upon his/her criminogenic needs and case plan goals. One-on-one engagement between DPOs and offenders occurs at a minimum of once per week.

Step 6: TRU DPOs ensure appropriate referrals are in place for a smooth transition from custody to the community, including referrals to one of Probation's Day Reporting Centers, Behavioral Health or other treatment providers, and housing programs. When necessary, referrals are initiated to resolve emergency housing prior to their release from custody.

Step 7: TRU offenders are assigned to their field DPO 30 days prior to release. Upon release, the offender is released to his/her assigned DPO and transported to the field office to review expectations and terms and conditions of probation. The offender is then transported to treatment or home.

Originality: This program initiates monitoring and provision of services by DPOs to offenders while they remain in custody, and prior to supervision formally being activated.

Cost Effectiveness: Eight staff positions funded by AB109 in the amount of \$1.3 million were allocated to TRU: 1 Supervising Probation Officer; 1 Senior Probation Officer and 6 Deputy Probation Officers at the five county jails.

Results: Since inception, TRU has assessed 213 offenders. Collectively, they have completed 779 case plan tasks and 328 C2C journals. The initial reporting rate upon their release from custody is 95%; success rates (no violations) 90 days post-release is 70%. Of those with a violation 90 days post-release, only 5% were violated for failing to report to probation. With a typical technical violation rate of 55%, the TRU program will save approximately 2,100 jail-bed days, or about \$300,000. The cost avoidance for the department's direct labor is estimated at \$3500. This does not include the labor savings to the district attorney's and public defender's offices or court staff to conduct violation hearings.

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