



OFFENDER REENTRY INITIATIVE: RECOMMENDED CRITERIA FOR THE COMMUNITY TRANSITION COORDINATION NETWORKS

Background

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature passed an adult offender reentry initiative with the goal of reducing recidivism through coordination of state and local services.¹ As part of that effort, the Legislature established a pilot program called Community Transition Coordination Networks (CTCN) to better provide offenders leaving prison or jail with coordinated supervision and services.

Under the legislation, counties, or groups of counties, can submit proposals to establish a CTCN. The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) is responsible for selecting up to four counties to receive funding for the pilot programs.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) was directed to “develop criteria” for use during the grant application process, which will assess a county’s readiness to implement a CTCN. This report describes those criteria. The Institute was also directed to conduct an outcome evaluation no later than December 2012.

Community Transition Coordination Networks

A CTCN is designed to aid adult offenders reentering the community from prison or jail through “a system of coordination that facilitates partnerships between supervision and service providers.”² Reentry plans will be developed collaboratively between the supervising authority and the offender based on identified risks and needs. These plans will guide services received in the community.

Beginning in 2008, counties can apply for grant funding to implement a CTCN in the community. According to the legislation, county proposals must address efficiencies in sharing space or resources, communication between agencies, and methods of establishing partnerships.

As directed by the Legislature, counties submitting a proposal must also conduct an inventory of services and resources and demonstrate that locally appropriate evidence-based practices are available to offenders in their community. The legislation indicates that programs can include housing and employment assistance, education, vocational and life skills training, and other special treatment services such as sex offender or chemical dependency treatment.

Implementation of the CTCN pilot program will begin in July 2008.

Timeline for CTCN Implementation (ESSB 6157)

September 2007

Institute develops criteria to guide grant review process.

January 2008

Counties present inventory or list of programs available to a policy advisory committee.

February 2008

Counties submit proposals for CTCNs.

April 2008

CTED selects up to four CTCN pilot program sites

July 2008

CTCN pilot programs begin.

2009–2012

CTCNs report annually to policy advisory committee.

June 2012

CTCN pilot programs end.

December 2012

Institute submits final evaluation of CTCNs.

¹ ESSB 6157, Chapter 483, Laws of 2007.

² Ibid.

Criteria for Assessing Counties' Readiness to Implement a CTCN

The Legislature directed the Institute to recommend criteria for assisting CTED during the grant review process. These criteria will help determine which county proposals have the best chance of implementing a CTCN.

According to the legislation, evaluating counties' readiness to implement a CTCN must include: assessing the social service needs of offenders, determining the capacity of local facilities and resources, and estimating the cost to implement and maintain a CTCN.

Many of the criteria recommended by the Institute are items that the legislation already requires of the counties.

1) Assess offenders' risks and needs to determine what services are appropriate.

The legislation directs counties to identify the risks and social service needs of offenders who release from confinement and suggested that counties use the Department of Corrections' (DOC) assessment tools whenever possible. In order to accomplish this, the Institute recommends that counties establish an agreement with DOC to obtain risk and needs assessment data. These data include:

- Static risk factors are those that cannot decrease, such as criminal history. Once a criminal record is obtained, it will always be part of an offender's history. DOC's static risk tool is based on an offender's juvenile and adult criminal history; it determines an offenders risk for reoffense. Offenders are classified into one of the following risk categories: low, moderate, high drug, high property, and high violent.
- DOC's needs assessment identifies the following domains: education, community employment, friends, residential, family, alcohol/drug use, mental health, aggression, attitudes/behaviors, and coping skills. DOC is scheduled to implement the needs assessment in July 2008.

If a CTCN proposes to serve offenders not under the jurisdiction of DOC, the Institute recommends that counties indicate its proposed method of formally assessing the needs of its offender population.

2) Conduct an inventory of programs and services available and implement evidence-based options.

The legislation directs counties to determine what state, local, and private programs are available in their counties to assist offenders in reentry. Counties are required to consult with DOC, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), law enforcement, local probation, community and technical colleges, non-profit organizations, housing providers, and others.

Since the legislation requires CTCNs to implement evidence-based and promising practices, the Institute recommends that counties compare its inventory of available programs with those listed in **Exhibit 1**. The Institute prepared this list of programs at legislative direction to identify strategies to reduce future prison construction, save money for taxpayers, and reduce crime rates in Washington State.³

The Institute recommends that evidence-based options, as shown in Exhibit 1, be given highest priority for potential programs used by CTCNs. If a county is interested in options not directly listed on Exhibit 1, then counties should select services that contain the key program elements of evidence-based options. County proposals should provide justification for choosing such a program.

For example, vocational education programs in prison have been shown to reduce crime. Although the effectiveness of vocational programs in the community has not yet been proven, a county may wish to experiment with such an approach in its community. The Institute recommends experimentation of this type in order to expand the list of evidence-based programs.

³ S. Aos, M. Miller, & E. Drake (2006). *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Document No. 06-10-1201.

3) Determine the necessity of specific services for the community.

Once an inventory of programs has been obtained, counties should determine the necessity for specific services in a given community such as job skills. For example, if a county is interested in offering a vocational skills program, the county should determine the demand for a specific trade by identifying jobs that exist in the community. Information from existing data sources, such as the Employment Security Department, United States Census, DOC, or DSHS, should be collected and analyzed to estimate the need for a specific program.

4) Focus on moderate to high risk offenders.

Because resources will not be available to serve all offenders released into the community, the Institute recommends that resources be focused on serving moderate to high risk offenders according to DOC's risk assessment tool. Focusing resources on offenders who have the highest risk for reoffense has the potential to produce the greatest impact on crime rates in a community.

5) Track and collect data.

Legislation requires that counties receiving money for a CTCN pilot program implement a data tracking system. Thus, the Institute recommends that each county outline its approach for tracking and collecting data in its proposal. Because these data systems are essential to the evaluation of CTCNs, the Institute will work directly with the four selected pilot counties to ensure that adequate data tracking systems are designed.

Exhibit 1

Reducing Crime With Evidence-Based Options: What Works, and Benefits & Costs

Washington State Institute for Public Policy Estimates as of October, 2006	Effect on Crime Outcomes Percent change in crime outcomes, & the number of evidence-based studies on which the estimate is based (in parentheses) (1)	Benefits and Costs (Per Participant, Net Present Value, 2006 Dollars)			
		Benefits to Crime Victims (of the reduction in crime) (2)	Benefits to Taxpayers (of the reduction in crime) (3)	Costs (marginal program cost, compared to the cost of alternative) (4)	Benefits (total) Minus Costs (per participant) (5)
		Notes: "n/e" means not estimated at this time. Prevention program costs are partial program costs, pro-rated to match crime outcomes.			
Programs for People in the Adult Offender System					
Vocational education in prison	-9.0% (4)	\$8,114	\$6,806	\$1,182	\$13,738
Intensive supervision: treatment-oriented programs	-16.7% (11)	\$9,318	\$9,369	\$7,124	\$11,563
General education in prison (basic education or post-secondary)	-7.0% (17)	\$6,325	\$5,306	\$962	\$10,669
Cognitive-behavioral therapy in prison or community	-6.3% (25)	\$5,658	\$4,746	\$105	\$10,299
Drug treatment in community	-9.3% (6)	\$5,133	\$5,495	\$574	\$10,054
Correctional industries in prison	-5.9% (4)	\$5,360	\$4,496	\$417	\$9,439
Drug treatment in prison (therapeutic communities or outpatient)	-5.7% (20)	\$5,133	\$4,306	\$1,604	\$7,835
Adult drug courts	-8.0% (57)	\$4,395	\$4,705	\$4,333	\$4,767
Employment and job training in the community	-4.3% (16)	\$2,373	\$2,386	\$400	\$4,359
Electronic monitoring to offset jail time	0% (9)	\$0	\$0	-\$870	\$870
Sex offender treatment in prison with aftercare	-7.0% (6)	\$6,442	\$2,885	\$12,585	-\$3,258
Intensive supervision: surveillance-oriented programs	0% (23)	\$0	\$0	\$3,747	-\$3,747
Washington's Dangerously Mentally Ill Offender program	-15.1% (1)	\$13,645	\$11,446	\$24,274	\$818
Drug treatment in jail	-4.5% (9)	\$2,481	\$2,656	n/e	n/e
Adult boot camps	0% (22)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Domestic violence education/cognitive-behavioral treatment	0% (9)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Jail diversion for mentally ill offenders	0% (11)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Life Skills education programs for adults	0% (4)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Program types in need of additional research & development before we can conclude they do or do not reduce crime outcomes:					
Programs needing more research for people in the adult offender system					
Case management in the community for drug offenders	0% (13)	Comment Findings are mixed for this broad grouping of programs.			
COSA (Faith-based supervision of sex offenders)	-22.3% (1)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Day fines (compared to standard probation)	0% (1)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Domestic violence courts	0% (2)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Faith-based programs	0% (5)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Intensive supervision of sex offenders in the community	0% (4)	Findings are mixed for this broad grouping of programs.			
Medical treatment of sex offenders	-21.4% (1)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Mixed treatment of sex offenders in the community	0% (2)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Regular parole supervision vs. no parole supervision	0% (1)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Restorative justice programs for lower risk adult offenders	0% (6)	Findings are mixed for this broad grouping of programs.			
Therapeutic community programs for mentally ill offenders	-20.8% (2)	Too few evaluations to date.			
Work release programs (from prison)	-4.3% (4)	Too few recent evaluations.			

Source: S. Aos, M. Miller, & E. Drake (2006).

The Institute recommends the following basic data tracking requirements for counties submitting proposals:

Information on offenders receiving services:

- Which offenders receive services,
- Type and amount of services received,
- Status of progress (e.g., completion),
- Interim outcomes of interest such as drug use, and
- Reassessment data to determine if the needs of the offender changed after the program.

Information on offenders not receiving services:

- Which offenders do not receive services,
- Type of services needed, and
- Reason offender did not receive services.

In 1997, at legislative direction, the Institute established a definition of recidivism to be used as an outcome-based standard for measuring program success.⁴ Since then, the Institute has developed a database to efficiently measure criminal recidivism. The database is a synthesis of criminal charge information that was derived using elements of Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and DOC data systems. This criminal history database will be used to track recidivism for the Institute's evaluation of the CTCNs; therefore, counties will not need to track recidivism for purposes of program evaluation.

⁴ R. Barnoski (1997). *Standards for improving research effectiveness in adult and juvenile justice*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Document No. 97-12-1201.

6) Implement quality assurance standards.

A 2004 study conducted by the Institute found that some juvenile programs reduced recidivism, but only when competently delivered.⁵ Thus, it is important to implement quality assurance standards to fully benefit from the evidence-based programs.⁶ The Institute recommends that a county describe in its proposal how it intends to assure that programs will be delivered with fidelity to the treatment design.

7) Limit the number of programs available by CTCNs.

The Institute recommends that the number of programs available by CTCNs be limited to just a few for the following reasons: the quality of services is likely to be higher if resources are focused on just a few programs; more programs will result in more costly overhead; and limiting the number of programs will help to ensure that the sample size is large enough to conduct a meaningful outcome evaluation to determine if the program lowers recidivism.

8) Collect program cost information.

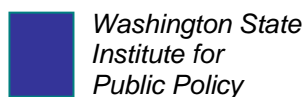
The legislation requires that counties estimate the cost to implement and maintain a CTCN. In order to evaluate the programs, the Institute recommends that counties describe the procedures they intend to use to track direct and indirect costs of delivering programs.

⁵ R. Barnoski & S. Aos (2004). *Outcome evaluation of Washington State's research-based programs for juvenile offenders*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Document No. 04-01-1201.

⁶ For more information on quality adherence standards see: R. Barnoski, S. Aos, & R. Lieb (2003). *Recommended quality control standards*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Document No. 03-12-1203.

For further information, please contact Elizabeth Drake at (360) 586-2767 or ekdrake@wsipp.wa.gov.

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