

CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Idaho Department of Correction
Reentry Program Strategy
Impacts and Costs



Submitted by

The Idaho Department of Correction
Operations – Programs Division

May 27, 2004

Creating Safer Communities

Executive Summary

Fact: 3,233 incarcerated offenders were released from Idaho prisons in **2003**.

Fact: 6,235 offenders are incarcerated in Idaho prisons (**May 27, 2004**).

Fact: 97% of all Idaho **offenders will leave prison and return to communities**.

Corrections is viewed as the agency that ensures public safety by locking up dangerous criminals. Given the facts above, reducing offender risk and providing opportunities for offenders to change is an essential part of the corrections mission.

The Idaho Department of Correction committed to providing research-based programs in 1998 with the opening of a Therapeutic Community. Building the core programs needed to provide opportunities for offenders to change behavior has been an ongoing process.

The base has been built, but are the programs working? The Idaho Department of Correction is currently conducting a three-year study with the University of Idaho to gauge program results. The study is the most comprehensive effort ever undertaken to measure program effectiveness. The first year of this three-year effort is just concluding.

Internal analysis provides some interim information and indicates IDOC programs are working to reduce recidivism.

Fact: Therapeutic Community programs provided in the Idaho Department of Correction **have lowered recidivism** since 1999.

- Nationwide, properly managed Therapeutic Communities (TC) have been shown to reduce recidivism. In Idaho the same is true. Those who completed a TC have revoked parole at a 43% rate versus 62% for non-completes.

Fact: Relapse Prevention courses provided by the Idaho Department of Correction **have saved Idaho taxpayers more than 4 million dollars**.

- Idaho research indicates that completion of Drug/Alcohol Relapse Prevention courses have reduced prison length of stay by an average of 4 months for those participating. Program delivery was \$67,176. Those earlier releases saved taxpayers 4.1 million.

The effort to provide change opportunities for offenders is a part of daily life and interwoven in the department philosophy to offender management.

The analysis that follows measures program impacts, costs and benefits with current data available. The Department is committed to measuring programs, their effectiveness, cost and benefit. This is a process and not an event. The base has been built and the work is underway.

CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Idaho Department of Correction Reentry Program Strategy Impacts and Costs

The most meaningful and long range measure of the Idaho Department of Correction's effectiveness is the successful reduction in the number of offenders who recidivate. We also recognize that the impact of crime extends beyond recidivism measures and the costs of prosecution, incarceration, and victimization. While many outcomes can be measured, the intangible impact of reduced recidivism can not. Offender pro-social changes have tremendous intrinsic value to the community. The impact of crime is not just a Department of Correction problem; it is a community problem. Offender programs and education are an integral part of the Department's offender management strategy intended to reduce offender risk and recidivism. Programs and education provide opportunities for offenders to change, and are core in maintaining a safe prison environment, and pivotal in our commitment to keeping our communities safe.

Of all offenders currently incarcerated, 97% will leave prison and return to the community. In 2003, 3,233 incarcerated offenders were released from Idaho prisons, nearly double the number released in 1996 (1,790). Given this reality, the Department has utilized the latest research to develop programs that will have the greatest impact on reducing offenders' risk to the community. This document reviews the results of national research on "What Works" in corrections, Idaho results to date, and the costs associated with providing programs and education to Idaho's incarcerated offenders.

Nationally, more than two out of three inmates (67.5%) released were rearrested within three years (Langan & Levin, 2002). Also nationally, 51.8% of those released from prison were returned to prison within three years (MTC Institute, 2003). Despite these daunting numbers, research indicates that specific programs, delivered in the proper manner, can reduce recidivism significantly.

BEST PRACTICES

A recent report by S. L. Brown (S.L. Brown, 2004) synthesized findings of over 500 studies spanning five decades of research and concluded that any kind of human-service treatment reduces recidivism an average of 10%. In this same report, S. L. Brown concluded that treatment approaches that follow empirically validated principles of effective cognitive behavioral intervention have proven to yield substantially higher reductions in recidivism, ranging from 26% to 40%.

Research has consistently indicated that the *manner* in which cognitive behavioral programs are administered can reduce recidivism between 25-30% (MTC Institute, 2003). Generally speaking, these rehabilitative approaches have proven effective for male and female offenders (Federal Bureau of Prisons, Executive Summary 2001), with the understanding that gender responsiveness issues are acknowledged and addressed.

In addition, properly managed Therapeutic Communities have shown to reduce recidivism. A recent study in California compared the recidivism rate of TC and TC Aftercare participants (25%) with that of non-TC participants (67%) (Hiller, et al., 1999). The Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse estimates that an offender who successfully completes a TC program and returns to the community as a sober parolee with a job will provide that community with \$68,910 in economic benefits in the first year of release (C.E. Culpepper, 1998). This figure is based upon and reflects reduced crime savings, reduction in arrest, prosecution, and incarceration costs, health care and substance abuse treatment costs, and the economic benefits of employment.

Several cost/benefit analyses have been performed analyzing the dollars saved by taxpayers in reduced criminal justice system costs for each dollar expended per inmate in a specified program. One study concluded that every dollar spent on human-service oriented programming in criminal justice returns a savings of \$5 to taxpayers and \$7 to victims (MTC Institute, 2003). It has also been empirically shown that education and treatment is seven times more cost effective than arrest and incarceration for substance addiction (Rydell & Everingham, RAND 1994).

In order for rehabilitative programs to have the greatest impact on reducing recidivism, research indicates that these programs must exhibit the following characteristics (MTC Institute, 2003):

- 1) Assessment driven
- 2) Highly structured and intensive
- 3) Maintain a cognitive/behavioral focus
- 4) Appropriate duration and continuity, and coordinated with proximity to release
- 5) A continuum of care from prison to the community (i.e. aftercare)

Notwithstanding the positive impact of rehabilitative programs, education remains the single best predictor for successful employment, lifetime income, standard of living, personal achievement, and keeping offenders out of prison (MTC Institute, 2003). In 1997, a three-state recidivism study was conducted by the Correctional Education Association for the US Department of Education (Steurer & Smith, 2003). This study, which measured education participation of approximately 3,600 offenders while incarcerated in Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio, showed that simply attending school while incarcerated reduced the likelihood of re-incarceration by 23%. This study also concluded that "the drop in recidivism in

each state clearly indicates that the program [education] returns at least \$2 for every \$1 spent in terms of savings in cell space on those who do not return to the system” (Steurer & Smith, 2003). In the same study, researchers found that, on average, correctional education participants out-earned non-participants over one-, two-, and three-year post-release periods by 30%, 10%, and 11% respectively.

Similarly, a study published in the Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency concluded that adult basic education, including the completion of high school equivalencies, is the most effective education-based program at reducing recidivism (Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie, 2000). In addition, this same study identified vocational training as the second most effective education-based program at reducing recidivism. It was also noted that vocational training has the greatest positive impact on the likelihood of the offender becoming employed upon release.

In order for education programs to have the greatest impact on reducing recidivism, research indicates that these programs must exhibit the following characteristics (MTC Institute, 2003):

- 1) Early assessment using a valid assessment instrument, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- 2) Appropriate duration, sustained continuity, and coordinated with proximity to release
- 3) Certified curricula delivered by certified instructors
- 4) Outcome focus (i.e. specifically focused on obtaining GED/HSE and/or Vocational Certificates)

Idaho Implementation

Idaho Offender Profile

Idaho’s incarcerated population has generally followed the same upward trend as the U.S. prison population from the mid-1990’s to 2002. However, Idaho has grown at a much faster pace. Idaho’s incarcerated population grew more than 50% while the U.S. incarcerated population grew by 17%. The average rate of Idaho offenders revoking parole and returning to prison from 1996 - 2003 was 39%.

Court commitments have continued to rise for violent and nonviolent offenses. While both have risen, the vast majority of court commitments to prison are nonviolent offenders. The average length of stay for offenders in Idaho prisons is 2 years 8 months. The percent of offenders entering prison on probation or parole revocations has remained relatively constant since 1996:

1996 – 53%	2000 – 56%
1997 – 54%	2001 – 52%
1998 – 57%	2002 – 56%

1999 – 57%

2003 – 55%

RESEARCH

Given the impact of crime in our communities and the overwhelming evidence in research that programs make a difference, the Department has implemented research-based programs that have shown to be effective. This process began as early as 1998, with the implementation of Therapeutic Communities. In conjunction with the Governor's Initiative in 2001, the Department began an extensive and coordinated implementation of research-proven programs targeting offender needs with appropriate programming.

The Department is measuring the impact of these programs. This systematic approach to monitoring program effectiveness allows the Department to identify and correct deficiencies or problems in the system. We have begun to see many positive results in Idaho. The hope is that the Department will not only be able to reduce recidivism, but have a positive impact on communities across the state.

Currently, the Department is working with the University of Idaho on a three-year outcome study. The University of Idaho is replicating the same methodology utilized in the three-state recidivism study mentioned earlier. This outcome study is measuring the impact of education, therapeutic community, cognitive self-change, and drug/alcohol relapse prevention programs on recidivism. In addition, the University of Idaho is conducting a cost/benefit analysis on the above listed programs and will provide the Department with the criminal justice savings per inmate who completed a program compared to the cost of the program.

This comprehensive effort, both internally and through the University of Idaho, has been an ongoing process since 2001. The results of this effort have been, and will continue to be, measured for years to come. The following summarizes the Department's efforts in implementing and standardizing research-based core programs, with the accompanying impact we are able to measure thus far.

PROGRAMS

Assessment

The Department implemented a new assessment protocol in 2001. This included replacing the Wisconsin Risk/Needs with the Level of Service Inventory, Revised (LSI-R). Currently, every offender entering the Department is administered the LSI-R. The Department, in conjunction with the University of Cincinnati, validated the LSI-R on Idaho offenders using recidivism measures. The LSI-R proved itself valid in Idaho, consistent with national research. Through this study, for example, we know that "high-risk offenders are about 1.6 times as likely to be arrested when compared to moderate-risk offenders and over five times as likely to be arrested when compared to low-risk offenders" (Lowenkamp, 2002).

Also as part of this assessment protocol, every offender is screened for chemical dependence using the Texas Christian University (TCU) Drug/Alcohol Screen. In addition, every offender entering prison is assessed for literacy using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). A variety of secondary assessments are administered as needed. All of the Department's assessment instruments are nationally validated and provided at a minimal cost.

Assessment Costs:

- LSI-R: \$9,750 per year (9,750 LSI-R's @ \$1 per test)
- TCU Drug Screen: Free
- TABE Locator: \$6,689.28 per year (3,216 TABE Locators-FY03 @ \$2.08 per test)
- Vocational Assessment/Screening: \$0 (Grant funded)

Total Annual Cost: \$16,439.28 *(This represents the actual cost of the assessments alone, not the employee time needed to administer or interpret the assessment.)*

In addition to better determining offender referrals into appropriate programming, this new assessment protocol allows the IDOC to provide aggregate quantitative information that was not previously possible. A sample of such information is as follows:

- Of the 14,301 offenders that have been assessed to date with the LSI-R:**
- 38% of offenders in prison are HIGH RISK, 51% are MODERATE RISK, and only 11% are LOW RISK
- 17% of offenders on community supervision are HIGH RISK, 57% are MODERATE RISK, and 26% are LOW RISK
- 31% of the offender population was identified as having a severe mental health problem or needed further mental health assessment
- 67% of the offender population has a significant substance abuse problem with the need for immediate treatment
- 975 offenders in prison, within 2 years of release, were assessed as needing a Therapeutic Community
- 3,080 offenders in prison currently do not have a high school education (54%)

Relapse Prevention

Our research in Idaho indicates that completion of Drug/Alcohol Relapse Prevention courses have shown to reduce prison length of stay by 4 months (since July 1, 2001); a savings of \$4.1 million in incarceration costs.* The total program cost (as defined below) for those who completed the program over that same time period was \$67,176. Insufficient time has elapsed to measure recidivism rates on Drug/Alcohol Relapse Prevention program completers, but we anticipate lower rates of these offenders returning to prison.

Relapse Prevention Program Costs and Participation *(in addition to the cost of incarceration):*

\$83.76 per offender to complete the program (*Programming cost information for CSC, Relapse Prevention, and Therapeutic Community are based on the Department's targeted program delivery production expectations. Cost data is not representative of actual expenses, but represents what we expect only the labor required for program delivery services to cost when operating at peak efficiency.*)

498 offenders are currently enrolled statewide (does not include offenders in groups offered by private community providers).

** 1,673 offenders assessed as needing relapse prevention beginning July 01; 802 offenders completed the program and subsequently paroled 4 months earlier, on average, than the remaining 871 offenders who did not complete the program; 802 program completers @ \$43 per day for 4 months = \$4.13 million; The cost for those completers is calculated @ 802 x \$83.76 = \$67,175.52.*

Therapeutic Community (TC)

The Department collects outcome information relative to Therapeutic Community program participation. TC programs have had the following impact since 1999: Higher parole rate for TC completers - 92% versus non-completers - 53%; Lower revocation rate for TC completers - 43% versus non-completers - 62%; And, shortened length of stay in prison by 2 months (since July, 01).

TC Program Costs and Participation *(in addition to the cost of incarceration):*

\$2,325.83 per offender to complete the program (*Programming cost information for CSC, SA/RP and TC are based on the Department's targeted program delivery production expectations. Cost data is not representative of actual expenses, but represents what we expect only the labor required for program delivery services to cost when operating at peak efficiency*)

210 offenders are currently enrolled statewide (*does not include Idaho Correctional Center – ICC*).

Cognitive Self Change

As the result of an evaluation process of the Department's Cognitive Self-Change program in 2003, it was confirmed that this program was not producing the desired outcomes we identified in our performance measures. In response, the Department, with the assistance of a nationally recognized CSC expert, modified the program to create a more effective skill-based and cohesive program. The CSC Idaho Model was implemented in the Fall of 2003. We are monitoring outcomes relative to this new CSC program, and when sufficient time has

elapsed to measure impact on parole release and recidivism rates, we expect similar benefits identified in the national research.

Cognitive Self-Change, Idaho Model, Program Costs and Participation *(in addition to the cost of incarceration):*

\$108.75 per offender to complete the program *(Programming cost information for CSC, Relapse Prevention, and Therapeutic Community are based on the Department's targeted program delivery production expectations. Cost data is not representative of actual expenses, but represents what we expect only the labor required for program delivery services to cost when operating at peak efficiency.)*

436 offenders are currently enrolled statewide (does not include offenders in groups offered by private community providers).

Education

The Robert Janss School has nine prison campuses and teaches both academic and vocational curricula. Both programs are driven by assessments, which are given during the first few days of incarceration. The TABE is used for determining academic ability. The academic curricula include literacy, GED/HSD preparation with accompanying GED testing and certification, and Special Education. The vocational program has three phases: workforce development, workforce skills, and on-the-job training. The Robert Janss School is accredited through Northwest Accreditation and ascribes to all of the certifications that are associated with accreditation. Offenders receive certificates, with formal graduations, when they achieve the standards that are in place.

Based on Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor statistics, unskilled workers with short-term on-the-job training average \$8.80 per hour in earnings in Idaho. Through the vocational program, the Department is targeting increased long-term moderate on-the-job training, combined with work experience in a related occupation. With this increased level of skill and experience, the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor statistics indicates that this will equate to an increase in earnings to \$16.28 per hour.

The total cost of education coursework delivery is still being evaluated.

686 offenders are currently enrolled in education programs in prison *(does not include offenders in education classes offered by colleges in the community).*

40 offenders are enrolled in the Vocational Program, Phase 1 – Workforce Readiness.

175 offenders are enrolled in the Vocation Program, Phase 2 – Workforce Skills.

Gender-Specific Programs

The Department has implemented Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) therapy groups for female offenders in prison, as well as a Domestic Violence and Women in Recovery classes. In addition, the Pocatello Women's Correctional Center maintains a 60-bed Therapeutic Community. The impact of program participation by female offenders is reflected in the recidivism rates for Therapeutic Community and Relapse Prevention participation. Although female offenders recidivate at lower rates than male offenders, participation in relapse prevention and therapeutic community programs lessen their likelihood of return to prison.

Structured Reentry

The Department implemented the Structured Reentry process in 2003. This involved not only training Department staff, but also developing or solidifying community partnerships. This process extends beyond a national trend and has become a state and local initiative.

Although this is more of an improved protocol than an independent program, the Department has identified a means by which the success of this process will be measured. This includes measurements relating to earlier offender release and the portion of offenders released that have met the goals identified by their case managers. In connection with structured reentry, we are also tracking the use of transition money provided to offenders and the subsequent impact on recidivism. Our first analysis completed in 2002 indicated that transition funds did not significantly impact recidivism. Although all things may be relatively equal with respect to recidivism, the funds provided to facilitate earlier release of indigent offenders (who would have otherwise remained in prison) provide significant cost savings.

Quality Assurance

The Department is currently implementing a large number of Quality Self-Assessments (QSA), many of which have already been implemented or are being piloted. These standardized measures of compliance allow each entity within the Department to measure their compliance with existing policies and procedures.

In addition to the quantitative aspect of program effectiveness, the Department is also monitoring the quality of program delivery through clinical supervision. This includes direct observation of Department staff and contractor delivered programs to ensure effective facilitator skills, appropriate and consistent course content, and overall program integrity. The Department's clinical supervisor provides written feedback using objective observation criteria and also provides any necessary training or mentoring.

Summary

The number of offenders leaving the prisons of the Department of Correction in Idaho has increased steadily over the past 10 years. In 2004, over 3,000 offenders will be released into the neighborhoods of our state. This creates a burden on state and local resources, expenditures, public safety, health care, victims, family stability and much more. It is in the State's best interest to understand the complexities of the causal and socio-economic impacts as well as defining a comprehensive collaborative plan and strategy to lessen the impacts on our communities. The Department, together with many other state and community agencies, is beginning to understand that through partnerships, collaboration, and a community approach, much can be done to reduce the risks for re-offending and the revolving door back in to prison.

While Idaho recognizes that we are linked to a broad range of criminal justice and other policy issues – the Department is addressing its role in returning properly prepared offenders to their communities. Our job is to return them in a better condition pro-socially, reduce their risk, while safely managing their return into our communities. In order to accomplish this, we have developed a comprehensive strategy. This strategy is outlined as follows:

- Implementation of research-based assessments
- Comprehensive offender management and treatment plans
- Community alternatives and intermediate sanctions for violators -- Education, workforce development, relapse prevention, cognitive self-change and family reunification, sex offender, mental health
- Consistent and systematic delivery of programs
- Gender-specific programs
- Collaborative/partnership agreements with other agencies
- Continuum of aftercare services
- Extensive drug and alcohol testing and monitoring
- Public safety alliances
- Prioritized outcomes and competencies which are effectively evaluated and measured through quality assurance programs
- Data that supports what is working and what is not
- Working with faith-based organizations consistent with our strategies

In essence, Idaho has developed, together with many other agencies, a comprehensive plan to implement research-based programs in a continuum of services and aftercare which is beginning to demonstrate substantial results as identified in national research studies. The benefits related to the quality of life in our communities, as well as greater public safety, is enormous.

The Idaho Department of Correction is not alone in this effort – we are only in the beginning stages of realizing the challenge and developing a long-term approach to reducing recidivism and making Idaho a safer place to live.

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