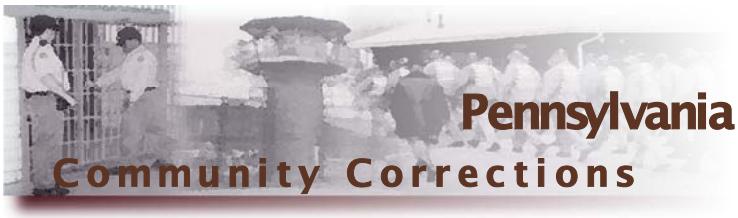

Community Corrections
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

Community Corrections Centers are half-way houses. There are currently 14 state-run facilities in operation and 38 contracted facilities. They are strategically located in urban communities throughout the Commonwealth. State-run facilities are located as follows: four in Philadelphia; two in Pittsburgh; and one each in these communities - Scranton, Allentown, Harrisburg, York, Johnstown, Sharon, Wernersville, and Erie. One Center in Philadelphia and one in Pittsburgh are exclusively for women; the remaining twelve serve male offenders.

While in a Community Corrections Center, inmates participate in aftercare programming and continue to prepare for community reintegration. The main focus is on establishing linkages with family and the community, identifying positive role models, and securing employment.

Of those inmates who are paroled for the first time from state correctional institutions, ninety-eight percent return to Pennsylvania communities. Community Corrections Centers are instruments of the Department of Corrections for providing initial support to the resident in his or her first steps back to his or her community by providing:

- Counseling services, individual and family
- Employment counseling
- Vocations and education guidance
- Enlisting the aid of public and private agencies where special services are needed
- Directing the resident to specialized in-resident programs such as those dealing with drug or alcohol abuse.
- Gradual reduction of custodial control as the resident‘s acceptance of personal responsibility increases

Approximately 3,400 inmates are currently assigned to the Community Corrections programs.

Since the inception of Community Corrections with the initial Pre-Release Law, Act 173 of 1968, Community Corrections has evolved from a primarily 90 day decompression facility, assisting with reintegration-to-society in a community setting, to a continuum of services to inmates beginning with assessment at time of imprisonment, education and vocational opportunities in an adult correctional setting, on-going support team evaluations, furloughs, and finally referral to a Community Corrections Center.

Designed to approximate the reality of living in a community setting, residents in a Center are expected to secure employment or additional educational or vocational training. They are responsible in becoming self-sufficient; they pay rent, shop for and prepare their own meals, maintain their living quarters, and meet their financial obligations such as child support, and court costs, fines, restitution, and rent.

Criteria for participation in Community Corrections Centers is designed to ensure that inmates who are selected to participate are those who will present the least risk to the community and who will benefit the most from the program.

One approach to interfacing the residents with the community is to use specialized treatment services provided within the community call Community Contract Facilities. These facilities specialize in the areas of drug and alcohol rehabilitation and in those areas where services are either not sufficiently served by state-run centers of where there is not a sufficient commitment to justify a large Community Corrections Center is a specific geographic area.

A new “Front End” Diversionary Program was recently initiated. The State Intermediate Punishment Program (SIP) provides an option in State prison sentencing for those offenders who have alcohol or other drug issues where the offense was motivated by their use of alcohol or other drugs, have less serious offenses, and who would have received a sentence of 30 months or more. If an offender qualifies for the SIP Program, they are sentenced to a 24 month flat sentence and participate in an individualized treatment plan that involves limited time spent in an adult correctional facility in a therapeutic community, and the remaining portion of the sentence provides them with in-patient and out-patient therapy out in the community. The offender remains under supervision while getting beneficial treatment to assist them with overcoming their addiction.

The Bureau of Community Corrections also contracts for services on behalf of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP). These facilities are designated Community parole Centers and essentially serve as “Half-Way Back” facilities for parolees who are experiencing difficulty under parole supervision and for whom a parole violation may be imminent. The purpose of this program is to provide an interim option for the PBPP as an alternative to citing a parolee for parole violation and returning him or her to a State Correctional Facility.

During 2007, over 10,000 inmates/parolees were admitted to Community Corrections Centers. Those residents physically able to work contributed to the costs of the program by reimbursing over $580,000 to the Department in rent as a requirement of participation. Additionally, over one-half million dollars is also paid on courts costs, fines, and restitution each year.

The role of Community Corrections in the State Correctional System continues to expand as a viable alternative in incarceration. It is the intent of the Department of Corrections the Community Corrections programs are advanced as rapidly as is consistent with continuing public safety.

Further information on Community Corrections Centers and the programs they offer are available by contacting:

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