



Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia

Office of Legislative, Intergovernmental and Public Affairs

Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA)

Accomplishments

The mission of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) for the District of Columbia is to:

increase public safety, prevent crime, reduce recidivism, and support the fair administration of justice in close collaboration with the community. The Agency will enhance decision-making and provide effective community supervision, thereby ensuring public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Since 2002, CSOSA has made a significant number of improvements in its operations and in the management and supervision of offenders under its jurisdiction. Improvements have been made in the areas of supervision services, specific program interventions, information technology, and community collaborations.

Supervision Services

CSOSA has some of the most stringent, public safety-oriented supervision guidelines in the country. Generally speaking, offenders under CSOSA's supervision are seen and drug tested more than the vast majority of offenders in other community corrections programs throughout the country. Between FY 2002 and FY 2005, CSOSA significantly reduced its caseload sizes so that staff could have meaningful contacts with offenders and use evidence-based practices, such as comprehensive risk and needs assessments and motivational interviewing, to improve offender outcomes and reduce recidivism. In addition, CSOSA changed from a fortress-based supervision model, whereby the offender reports into the office for contacts, to a place-based geographic model, whereby a mix of office visits and community contacts is used to get a better understanding of the offender from direct observations in the community and discussions with community (collateral) contacts. CSOSA, a relatively new federal agency, also has developed a number of policies and operational instructions that provide clear direction for staff on all aspects of offender management.

- **General Supervision:** General supervision teams supervise the majority of offenders. The average caseload is approximately 50 active and monitored cases per Community Supervision Officer (CSO). This ratio is one of the best caseload ratios in the country. *Active/monitored caseload ratios in other states tend to be much higher for each officer, ranging from 85 to 100 offenders (or higher) for each officer.*
- **Special Supervision/Treatment:** Special supervision teams have been developed to focus on high-risk offenders with special supervision and/or treatment needs, such as sex offenders,

mentally ill offenders, domestic violence offenders, traffic/alcohol offenders, and hard-core substance abusers. The average active/monitored caseload for these specialized teams averages 32 offenders per officer, *some of the lowest ratios in the country. Close to half of CSOSA's population is either in a special caseload or under intensive supervision.* This significantly reduced caseload provides supervision staff with the ability to closely monitor and track offenders' compliance with their terms of release and respond very quickly to issues of non-compliance.

- **Interstate Teams:** Interstate teams supervise offenders who were sentenced in other jurisdictions but relocated to the District of Columbia, as well as monitor D.C. offenders whose cases were transferred to other jurisdictions. *CSOSA has advocated for tougher interstate supervision standards through national criminal justice organizations.*
- **Comprehensive Risk and Needs Assessments:** Upon an offender's assignment to supervision, a comprehensive risk and needs assessment is conducted within 25 working days. This information provides a detailed understanding of the offender's needs and life style. Offenders are reassessed every six months and upon any rearrest up until the point where the offender completes supervision or reaches a minimum level of supervision. CSOSA's new risk and needs assessment, the AUTO Screener, identifies not only the offender's level of risk, but also the offender's needs and deficits. From the information gathered on the AUTO Screener, a recommended Prescriptive Supervision Plan (PSP) is automatically developed to guide the CSO's supervision of the offender. The PSP lists the offender's needs, goals, objectives, and target dates for completion. It is reviewed with the offender and updated regularly. The AUTO Screener program brings uniformity to risk and needs assessment for the entire supervised population.
- **Evidence-Based Training:** Over the past two years, CSOSA has provided evidence-based training to all management and line staff. Training included motivational interviewing techniques and the principles of evidence-based practices. There is a growing body of literature, known as "What Works," that has shown the efficacy of programs with comprehensive risk and needs assessments, treatment programs, drug and alcohol monitoring, co-occurring disorders, and relapse prevention programs in reducing offender recidivism and improving offender outcomes.¹ CSOSA has adopted this supervision model.
- **Policies and Operational Instructions:** CSOSA is a relatively new federal agency. Over the past four years, a number of policies and operational instructions have been developed to provide supervision guidance and direction to staff and address and supervision gaps. Policies developed since 2002 include:

POLICY	DATE
Failure to Report/Loss of Contact	10/19/2003

¹ Weekes, J.R., Moser, A.E., and Langevin, C.M. (1999). Assessing substance-abusing offenders for treatment. In Latessa, E., Ed. Strategic solutions: *The International Community Corrections Association examines substance abuse.* Arlington, VA: Kirby Lithographic Company.

Sex Offender Registration	10/31/2003
Offender Identification Cards	1/30/2004
Warrant Issue Status Cases	4/30/2004
Release of Defendant/Offender Drug Test Information	7/28/2004
Offender DNA Sample Collection	8/19/2004
Distribution of Tokens to Offenders	5/10/2005
Global Positioning System (GPS) Tracking of Offenders	5/11/2005
Disclosure to Authorities of Suspected Violations of Law By Offenders	7/21/2005
Accountability Tours	2/13/2006

Operational instructions include:

OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTIONS	DATE
Loss of Contact Policy Clarification	2/27/2002
Treatment Placement	3/1/2002
Warrants	3/11/2002
Loss of Contact/Supervised Releases	7/16/2002
Levels of Supervision	8/5/2002
Re-Arrest Notifications	9/27/2002
Show Cause Hearings	2/5/2003
Weekends in Jail	2/6/2003
Supervised Release	4/9/2003
Accountability Tours	4/30/2003
Accountability Tours: Role of CSO in Search and Seizure	5/22/2003
Public Law Placements	6/24/2003
Halfway House Placement as a Condition of Probation	8/27/2003
Fines, Costs, Restitution, et al.	9/26/2003
Alleged Violations Report (AVR)	12/22/2003
Procedures for Offenders Who Refuse DNA Sample Collections	5/3/2004
Confirmation of Positive Drug Test for Parole/Supervise Release Cases	5/13/2004
Self-Paid Traffic Alcohol Program (TAP) Services	6/1/2004
Employment Referrals to VOTEE, Services, and Verification	2/4/2005
Procedures for Monitoring Active & Monitored Offenders' Charges and Warrants	4/7/2005
Residential Contacts / Sleeping Arrangement Information	6/1/2005
Community Service As a Sanction	7/7/2005
Interstate Transfer Supervision	10/4/2005
USPC Reprimand Sanction Hearing	8/3/2006

Specific Program Interventions

CSOSA's program model incorporates a number of innovative supervision strategies and programs that emphasize offender **accountability** and **opportunity** to develop the skills and resources to support crime- and drug-free behavior and successfully reintegrate into society.

- **High Levels of Contact:** CSOSA policy mandates specified levels of contact with the offender population, based on the offender's level of risk. All offenders are assessed to determine their supervision and needs levels. Offenders classified as high-risk receive eight contacts per month, four of which are in the community. Levels of contact decrease to four, two and one contact(s) per month, based on the offender's risk assessment and demonstrated level of compliance. *Many jurisdictions throughout the country claim two face-to-face contacts as intensive supervision.*
- **Field Locations:** CSOSA utilizes a place-based geographic model of supervision, where by field locations are placed within the community near where the offender lives and significant contacts are made with the offender where they reside and work. CSOSA's six existing field locations promote close contact with the offender both in the office and at the residence or workplace. We are in neighborhoods to promote community based parole and probation. *Most jurisdictions throughout the country are located many miles from the populations they supervise.*
- **Surveillance Drug Testing:** Monitoring of the offender's compliance with release conditions is supplemented by extensive drug testing. CSOSA tests *all* offenders initially, starting at intake and continuing twice weekly for eight weeks. If the offender tests negative, the drug testing frequency decreases to weekly for an additional twelve weeks, then monthly throughout the term of supervision. If the offender tests positive at any time, the offender moves up to a higher drug testing schedule. Offender positive drug tests are addressed swiftly through a combination of treatment referrals and sanctions (increased drug testing, in-house drug education, sanctions groups or, in some cases, global positioning system (GPS) or short-term residential placement). *Most community supervision organizations do not drug test at all, or test small proportions of their populations.*
- **Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment:** CSOSA has a specialized unit, Central Intervention Team (CIT), which assesses offenders' substance abuse treatment needs and identifies appropriate interventions. CSOSA ensures the most needy, high risk offenders receive a continuum of detox, residential, and outpatient drug treatment services as needed through eleven contract providers. CSOSA also refers offenders to District of Columbia government substance abuse treatment services and Veterans Administration resources. CSOSA also provides direct treatment services for the most difficult offenders (approximately 25 percent of the population in need). *Most community supervision organizations refer to social service organizations (with endless waiting lists) for treatment services.*
- **Reentry Sanction Center (RSC):** In addition to assessing offenders' substance abuse treatment needs and linking offenders to needed community substance abuse resources, CSOSA also provides intensive assessment and reintegration programming services for targeted high-risk offenders. In FY 2006, CSOSA has renovated Karrick Hall (home of our Reentry and Sanctions Center) on the grounds of the DC General Hospital. The mission of the RSC is to provide intensive assessment and reintegration programming services in a residential setting (28 days) for high-risk, non-compliant offenders who are in

technical violation of their conditions of release. It is estimated that approximately 1,200 offenders will benefit from residential drug assessments and pre-treatment slots per year. *Research on programs of this type indicates that they are highly effective in reducing rearrests.*

- **Graduated Sanctions:** One of the keys to successful supervision is the implementation of swift and certain sanctions when rule-breaking behavior occurs. CSOSA's sanctions are defined in a contract between the officer and the offender, which is signed at the beginning of supervision. From the start, the offender knows what will happen if s/he does not comply. Sanction options include day reporting, electronic and GPS (satellite) monitoring, automatic return to twice weekly drug testing, increased telephone or in-person contacts with the supervision officer, and short-term residential placement. *Most intermediate sanctions in the country involve conversations with officers or supervisors.*
- **Global Positioning System (GPS):** CSOSA monitors selected sex, domestic violence and high-risk offenders via satellite. GPS monitoring also is being imposed as a sanction once the offender has demonstrated non-compliant behavior. GPS monitoring creates a real-time record of the offender's location and movements. We are now using GPS for a minimum of 100 offenders per day. *Many crimes have been solved and reincarcerations made through GPS. GPS also helps offenders accomplish treatment goals*
- **Vocational Opportunities Training, Education and Employment Services (VOTEE Unit):** After assessment, selected offenders are referred to one of four CSOSA learning labs throughout the city for assessment, educational services, job development skills, employment counseling and placement. Specialized services are offered to female offenders. *Thousands of offenders are served through VOTEE each year.*
- **Faith-Based Reentry Programs and Mentoring:** To date, the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership has formally certified over 75 faith institutions as mentor centers for offenders, trained approximately 232 mentors, and placed over 190 offenders with mentors. In June 2003, CSOSA expanded our Faith Community Partnership to include inmates housed at the Federal Bureau of Prison's Rivers Correctional Institution in North Carolina, which has a large population of District of Columbia inmates. Since the initial visit, the Faith Community Partnership has provided distance mentoring via video conferencing and made several re-entry presentations at Rivers (via video conferencing). *Efforts are underway to expand services to one of the federal prisons housing additional offenders and DC women.*
- **Transitional Intervention for Parole Supervision (TIPS):** To assist offenders on parole and supervised release transition back successfully into the community, CSOSA established three specialized TIPS teams. Two teams work with pre-parole/supervised release inmates in the institutions prior to their release to the Bureau of Prison's Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs, also referred to as halfway houses) or their direct release to the community. One TIPS team is located in a local RRC and works directly with offenders who transitioned to a RRC by the BOP to assist them in reentry. TIPS staff review and approve or disapprove offenders' release plans prior to their release from the institution or the RRCs to ensure their living and employment situations are appropriate. As needed, TIPS staff make

recommendations for public law placements, where the offender resides in an RRC until suitable housing is located. TIPS staff also make recommendations for treatment and social services. *It is rare to have parole and probation officers stationed in pre-release centers in the United States.*

- **Day Reporting Center (DRC):** In 2004, the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) established a Day Reporting Center (DRC) at its northwest field site as a new tool for dealing with high risk and non-compliant offenders. The goals of the DRC are to reduce offender re-arrest and encourage compliance through compulsory on-site intervention. The Center assists offenders in successfully reintegrating into society by providing needed services, such as substance abuse treatment, educational and vocational skills training and employment search assistance. Offenders in the program have the opportunity to receive life skills, stress management, family dynamics, literacy enhancement and computer training services. *CSOSA's DRC design is based on recent research, which shows that assessment-driven case management systems, that address offender's risks and needs empirically related to recidivism, can change offender behavior.*
- **United States Parole Commission Reprimand Sanction Hearings:** CSOSA is committed to assisting offenders to change and to successfully reintegrating into society. In 2006, CSOSA, in partnership with the United States Parole Commission (USPC), established USPC Reprimand Sanction Hearings. The mission of the USPC Reprimand Sanction Hearing is to provide a graduated sanction, short of revocation, that permits the Commission to address non-compliant offender behavior and to encourage a commitment from the offender to make positive behavioral changes to comply with the conditions of release.

Information Technology

CSOSA uses information technology as a tool to enhance its supervision strategies and management of offenders in the community. Towards this end, CSOSA developed its own information system, Supervision, Management, and Automated Record Tracking (SMART) system as its caseload management tool. As a result, SMART has become a hub of criminal justice information on District of Columbia offenders, allowing information sharing with D.C. Superior Court, the U.S. Attorney's General Office, U.S. Marshals Service, the Bureau of Prison, the USPC, and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). Through SMART, CSOSA is able to link up to MPD's database and identify rearrested offenders quickly so appropriate action can be taken. SMART also can be used to identify possible crime suspects. More importantly, SMART provides CSOSA with the ability to develop standard and ad hoc operational management and quality assurance reports so that management can gauge success in meeting performance objectives and targets. CSOSA's use of information technology also has resulted in video-conferencing for offenders at the Bureau of Prison's Rivers Correctional Facility to aid in the offender re-entry process. In addition, CSOSA staff have remote and wireless access to their information system. Laptop computers are used in the field to immediately record interaction with the offenders and monitor their supervision.

- **Pre-Sentence Investigation Reports:** In SMART, investigative CSOs prepare and electronically provide access to PSIs for the Court. These comprehensive reports provide precise information to protect public safety and assist the judiciary in its decision-making.
- **SMART External User Access:** CSOSA is able to provide access to SMART to its law enforcement partners, including staff at the D.C. Superior Court, the U.S. Attorney's General Office, U.S. Marshals Service, the Bureau of Prison, the USPC, and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). Only information allowed by law is shared with these external agencies. The sharing of information electronically results in more efficient process of offender records, quicker decision-making, identification of possible suspects, and serving of warrants.
- **SMART Track:** Several times a day, CSOSA's SMART database is matched against data in MPD's database system to quickly identify CSOSA offenders who have been rearrested in the District of Columbia. This feature allows the CSO to take quick action on cases.
- **SMART Reports:** Through a software application, Business Objects (BO), CSOSA is able to develop standard operational management and quality assurance reports at the Agency, Branch, and CSO level. In addition, BO allows the quick creation of ad hoc reports to answer specific questions as they arise.
- **Video Conferencing:** CSOSA uses video conferencing technology with offenders incarcerated at the Bureau of Prison's Rivers Correctional Facility to assist them in the offender re-entry process while they are still incarcerated. This use of technology allows CSOSA staff to make contact with the offender and begin their reentry planning to improve their chances for successful return to the community.
- **Remote and Wireless Access to SMART:** Through the use of laptops and wireless technology, CSOSA staff are able to access and enter information in SMART in real-time, regardless of their location. This technology allows supervision staff to closely monitor offenders and update information as it is received and noted in the community.

Community Collaborations

CSOSA is very visible in the community and partners extensively with government and non-profit service providers, other criminal justice agencies, and citizen groups. CSOSA's community activities promote awareness of CSOSA's mission, enhance CSOSA's public safety activities, and increase the range of support services available to offenders.

- **Community Relations:** CSOSA has a staff of six full-time community relations specialists. The Agency prides itself on its responsiveness to the community's concerns. Examples include participation in Community Justice Advisory Networks and neighborhood involvement in the placement of field offices and our Reentry and Sanctions Center (RSC). *Many offenders have community service responsibilities* that focus on projects identified by community stakeholders, especially in communities where offenders reside. Offenders can

have a community service requirement from the Court as, for example, in deferred sentence agreement cases, as well as a sanction for non-compliant behavior.

- **Coordinated Services:** CSOSA *coordinates social and mental health services* with government and private providers throughout the city. For example, approximately 45 faith-based institutions offer services, including counseling, housing, clothing and drug treatment services.
- **Accountability Tours/Partnering With the Metropolitan Police Department:** Community Supervision Officers conduct *thousands* of joint supervision of high-risk offenders in the community with Metropolitan Police Officers. CSOSA is a true partner with MPD in an attempt to reduce crime. In response to the District of Columbia's declared crime emergency in July 2006, CSOSA has collaborated with MPD to significantly increase the number of accountability tours, as well as conduct the tours over non-standard days and times, to include weekends and evening. CSOSA also provides training on its supervision practices at the MPD academy.
- **Mass Orientations:** *All offenders entering supervision* are required to attend an introductory public meeting to learn about CSOSA's programs and practices. These meetings are held quarterly for each Police Service Area. MPD officers assigned to the area attend, along with CSOSA Community Supervision Officers. The US Attorney's Office also participates.
- **Victim Services:** CSOSA maintains a program to provide services to crime victims upon request. CSOSA is responsible for ensuring *offenders comply with court orders* requiring payment to the Victims of Violent Crime Compensation Fund.
- **Offender Identification Letter:** Many offenders who are released after an extended period of incarceration are without valid government-issued identification or the necessary, vital documents, such as Social Security cards or birth certificates. Therefore, many offenders seeking employment, housing, and other related necessities have great difficulty due to their inability to produce valid identification. To address this need, CSOSA and the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2003 to make DMV identification cards more accessible to paroled offenders who have been released after at least a one-year period of incarceration (offenders) and are in need of identification.