



COURT SERVICES AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION AGENCY

for the District of Columbia

CSOSA Fact Sheet

July 2002

RE-ENTRY SYSTEM

Did You Know?

- CSOSA has over 3,300 active parole cases.
- Two-thirds of offenders have a history of substance abuse.
- On average, DC parolees are under supervision for approximately five years.
- CSOSA implemented its first re-entry pilot project in the 6th Police District.
- CSOSA opened a Learning Lab at St. Luke's Center to help offenders prepare for jobs.
- CSOSA establishes partnerships with non-profits, such as Davis Memorial Goodwill Industries, to augment employment assessment, placement, and retention services for ex-offenders.
- Recently introduced legislation, the "Drug Abuse Education, Prevention and Treatment Act of 2001" would authorize funding for local re-entry efforts.

The successful integration of offenders into communities through increased accountability and social support is the hallmark of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency's (CSOSA) Re-Entry System.

Prior to the establishment of CSOSA in 1997, offenders incarcerated in the District of Columbia's (DC) prison system returned to the community with minimal transitional support and supervision. There was clearly a need to change old approaches to transitioning individuals from prison back into the community. CSOSA took the lead in implementing an innovative program to reduce crime and enhance public safety through close supervision of offenders, swift and certain responses to violations, appropriate treatment, support services, and effective partnerships with the community, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and other agencies.

Before initiating the re-entry system, CSOSA began an intensive process of collecting data on the offender population to gain a clearer understanding of who was being released into the community. The data revealed that most DC parolees lacked the basic skills to successfully negotiate their environment, were unemployed or unemployable, lacked basic literacy skills, and had substance abuse problems.

The re-entry system was designed to provide an array of services, including drug testing, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, housing assistance, and job training and referral services to meet the needs of pre-parolees and split sentence probationers making the passage from prison to the community.

CSOSA's Re-entry System has three phases: (Phase 1) transi-

tional services, (Phase 2) enhanced supervision and community reintegration and (Phase 3) relapse/recidivism prevention and restitution.

During Phase 1, offenders are placed in highly-structured community transitional centers for a 30 to 120 day period. During the first fourteen days of this phase, the offender is not allowed to leave the center. CSOSA's Transitional Intervention for Parole Supervision (TIPS) team conducts comprehensive risk and needs assessments to guide the level of supervision, the type and intensity of drug testing and treatment, and the required support services. Offenders enter into performance contracts with the releasing authority and Community Supervision Officer (CSO). These contracts are supported by an individually-tailored supervision and intervention plan and accountability structure, much like the contracts used for Drug Courts. This phase of re-entry enables the offender to develop essential supportive relationships in the community.

Through enhanced supervision, during Phase 2, which lasts a minimum of six months, the offender is prepared to reintegrate into the community. Structured prosocial activities such as community service are performed and the offender is introduced to a quality supervision team comprised of CSOs specializing in anger management, criminality, life skills training, and addiction counseling, among other services.

A restorative justice component has been infused into CSOSA's Re-entry System through memoranda of understanding with the DC Departments of Public Works and Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to provide meaningful opportunities for offenders to participate in community service projects.

Re-entry teams, comprised of community members, family, criminal justice professionals, treatment providers, and mentors are developed to support and assist the offender during the re-entry period.

Phase 3 will last a minimum of six months with the aim of helping the offender become more independent in the community and ensuring that a firm and sustaining support system is in place to help the offender resist illegal activities.

During the Spring of 2000, CSOSA implemented its re-entry pilot project in the 6th Police District. CSOSA and the MPD have already established several successful community justice partnerships to increase the accountability of offenders who reside in that community.

The centerpiece of CSOSA's first re-entry project is the Learning Lab located at St. Luke's Center. Grant funding allowed CSOSA to purchase computer equipment and to hire specialists who provide educational, vocational, employment and other assistance to prepare offenders for jobs with upward mobility.

CSOSA establishes partnerships with non-profits, such as Davis Memorial Goodwill Industries, to augment employment assessment, placement, and retention services for ex-offenders. In addition, the Clark Construction Company and other private sector employers have pledged their support for the re-entry system by offering jobs to qualified ex-offenders.

In the future, CSOSA plans to expand its re-entry system District-wide. We are encouraged by the recently introduced Federal legislation that includes language to authorize funding for re-entry efforts in the District of Columbia.